ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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S hared E xpectations for E xcellence in D evelopment

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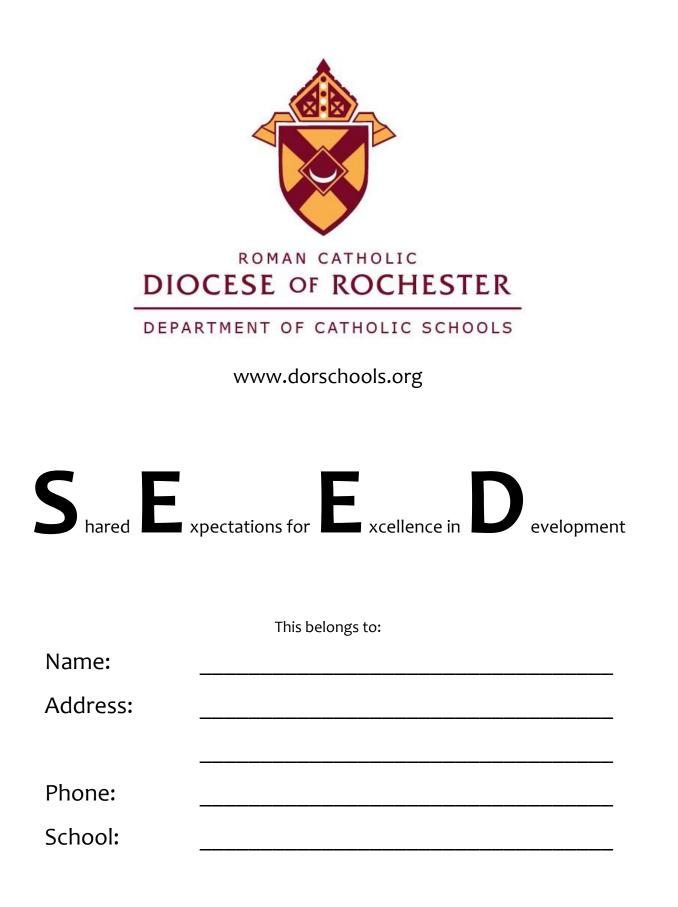
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"The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith."

-The Catholic School (1977)

"From the moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics."

-The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School (1988)

"Catholic parents are reminded of their duty to send their children to Catholic schools wherever this is possible, to give Catholic schools all the support in their power, and to cooperate with them in their work for the good of all their children."

-Gravissimum Educationis (1965)

"Prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community. Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of man's most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings."

-The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School (1988)

"The project of the Catholic school is convincing only if carried out by people who are deeply motivated, because they witness to a living encounter with Christ, in whom alone, the mystery of man truly becomes clear."

-Educating Together in Catholic Schools (2007)

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Our Mission
The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Rochester offer families a Catholic education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our schools:
> • *Lead students to be disciples who know and live the Catholic faith;*
> • *Inspire a learning community to foster academic excellence; and*
> • *Motivate young people to fulfill the two great commandments of Jesus Christ by loving God and self in order to be responsible and give service to our neighbor.*

Belief Statements
Faith
We believe that:
> • Jesus Christ is the foundation of our Catholic school community and the center of everything that we do.
> • Each child is welcomed in our faith community and makes a positive contribution to the Church and society.
> • Catholic schools carry out the educational mission of the Roman Catholic Church and are an integral part of our parishes.
> • Catholic schools are instrumental in building communities of faith, hope, and love.
> • Parents and guardians are an essential element of the school community and we recognize the rights of parents as the primary educators of their children.

Values
We believe that:
> • Each person is a unique being in the image and likeness of God and therefore deserves respect and dignity.
> • Respect and dignity begin with self in the context of family and extend to others in the community.
> • Students should develop leadership skills that enable them to be active Christians and responsible citizens.
> • Our community appreciates the unity and diversity which comprise the human family.
> • All of God's creation should be acknowledged as God's gift and deserves admiration through our good stewardship.

Learning
We believe that:
> • Children learn in a variety of ways, according to their individual needs, with high academic expectations and support.
> • All children have the right to learn in a safe, secure, and stimulating environment.
> • Learning is enhanced through meaningful partnerships between the Church, home, and school.

Service
We believe that:
> • Life-long faith formation in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church creates and supports a compassionate, service-oriented community.
> • Respect for self, our school family and the diverse community in which we live inspires students to serve.
> • Service to the community is rooted in our love for God and motivates us to love one another.

Profile of a Graduate

Graduates of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Rochester will reach their potential spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.

Spiritually, graduates will:
> • Appreciate that they are created to know, love, and serve God.
> • Pray daily and participate in the sacramental life of the Church to deepen their personal relationship with God.
> • Be well-prepared to serve their communities with faith, compassion, empathy, and kindness.
> • Be equipped to appreciate and articulate Church teachings to spread the Gospel.
> • Show respect and appreciation for all of God's creation.
> • Be active members of their Catholic community, including the parish, diocese, and universal church.
> • Work for truth and promote Catholic social justice.

Intellectually, graduates will:
> • Think creatively, independently, and critically.
> • Achieve their highest academic potential.
> • Use technology in their daily lives safely and ethically for academic and personal needs.
> • Remain intellectually curious by becoming reflective, life-long learners.
> • Meet and exceed content area standards and expectations.
> • Develop multiple interests as life-long and well-rounded students.
> • Solve problems using the resources and methods available to them.
> • Express themselves clearly and respectfully in speaking and writing.
> • Find solutions through critical thinking and the process of collaboration.

Emotionally, graduates will:
> • Work collaboratively to appreciate the diversity of the world and the uniqueness of the individual.
> • Demonstrate a positive sense of self and ongoing personal growth and development in acquiring virtues.
> • Make ethical and moral decisions informed by Catholic teachings.
> • Demonstrate self-control and discipline as incarnational values.

Physically, graduates will:
- Reflect their God-given dignity in thought, word and action.
- Strive for a healthy lifestyle which integrates nutrition, fitness, rest, stress management, and overall wellness.
- Make good moral choices that promote stewardship for God's gifts and safety for self and others.
- Develop leadership skills in order to become confident, independent, Christ-like role models.

Purpose of Shared Expectations for Excellence in Development

Shared Expectations for Excellence in Development was originally published in August 2013 as a revision to *SHAPE 2000 and Beyond … Sharing High Assessment & Performance Expectations*.

The guidelines included in this document are meant to be shared with our students, faculty, staff, and parent(s)/guardian(s). The naming of this document and the inclusion of a broader audience was done to reflect our efforts to create a supportive school environment that fulfills our mission. By registering at a Diocese of Rochester school, students and parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to adhere to this document and understand that the Department of Catholic Schools reserves the right to make changes to this document at any time. Individual schools are expected to publish a school handbook that supplements this document with specific policies and procedures.

Curriculum

Our curriculum integrates our Catholic faith and includes all teaching and learning experiences. The curriculum taught in our schools is based upon a framework provided by the Diocese of Rochester Department of Catholic Schools in conjunction with the New York State Education Department and Interdiocesan Curriculum Committee of New York State. Each teacher, under the direction of the school principal as the instructional leader, uses a variety of resources in developing their lesson plans and units. All curriculum is designed to address learning outcomes agreed upon by diocesan teachers that meet and/or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate to show connections between all subject areas and allow for students to apply skills and knowledge across the curriculum.

Religion is taught daily as a core subject at all grade levels, and is also integrated into all subject areas and aspects of the school day. Prayer occurs multiple times daily, and the integration of religious values within other subject areas is the constant responsibility of all faculty and staff. The Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Catholic education is grouped into four categories comprised of fourteen total themes:
- Word   – Revelation, Scripture, Creedal Concepts
- Worship   – Sacraments, Prayer and Worship, Special Seasons
- Community   – Church, Faith and Identity, Personal Growth, Relationships
- Discipleship – Christian Lifestyles, Morality, Justice and Peace, Service

Assessment Philosophy
The Department of Catholic Schools asserts that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning by providing specific and timely feedback while informing the teaching process. Teachers provide feedback that can be used to improve student learning. A grade is considered one component of assessment. Expectations for the completion of student work must should be explicit. As determined by the classroom teacher, rubrics with indicators with samples of appropriate work will be provided for students.

Summative Assessments
Each subject area and area grade level consists of predetermined units of study, with a summative assessment at the conclusion of each unit. Summative assessments come in a variety of forms in order to ascertain students' enduring understandings. Project-based applications of knowledge and skills are encouraged when possible, but there is also value to "traditional tests" when properly designed and appropriately used. The principal is the instructional leader of the school and regularly advises teachers to ensure the appropriateness of summative assessments. Summative assessments should be completed primarily within the school day, but portions may be required to be completed elsewhere when appropriate. Summative assessments can be completed as an individual or group at the discretion of the teacher, but each student should be individually assessed based on his or her work. When the nature of the assessment permits, summative assessments should be evaluated using a rubric with indicators that is provided with the description of the assessment at the beginning of the unit of study. For each unit of study, teachers should retain samples of summative assessments exhibiting high, medium, and low quality work and any accompanying rubrics with feedback. Each summative assessment is completed at a time appropriate to the unit of study and no additional weight is given to summative assessments completed at the conclusion of a semester. For third through eighth grade, summative assessments constitute 50% of the marking period grade and are defined as projects, tests, and quizzes.

New York State Assessments
New York State administers assessments for third grade through eighth grade in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The New York State assessments are designed to assess a student's performance in meeting the grade-level New York State Learning Standards. Students achieving a score in Level 3 or higher have met the grade-level learning standards. The New York State assessments are one of the factors used to determine if a student will receive Academic Intervention Services.

Student Support
Teachers are expected to modify their teaching styles to meet the learning needs of each student when possible. The school is expected to address the learning needs of students with learning disabilities when possible and work in cooperation with the local public school district's pupil personnel services. Teachers will follow an Individualized Education Plan or the school's Academic Accommodation Plan for students with learning disabilities when assessing student growth and progress. The plan must indicate how academic progress will be communicated to the parent(s)/guardian(s) throughout the school year and becomes part of the student's permanent academic record.

Student Work
All students are expected to use proper handwriting skills in all work and exemplify neatness. The discretion of the principal is relied upon as instructional leader of the school, but the general guide is for manuscript (printing) to be used exclusively in kindergarten and first grade, with cursive writing to be introduced in second grade. Handwriting should be integrated into instruction of all subject areas after second grade and both styles of writing should be utilized through eighth grade. A standard heading should be used for written work that includes student name, date, grade, subject, and school name. The rules of writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) should be followed for all written work. Teachers provide instruction on note-taking and organizational skills and students are expected to maintain neat and well organized class materials and notes. The use of technology for completing assignments is at the discretion of the teacher dependent upon student learning needs and the availability of technology.

Report Cards
All schools are required to report student progress to parent(s)/guardian(s) four times each school year using the report card templates provided by the Diocese of Rochester Department of Catholic Schools. Student progress in Pre-Kindergarten 3 and Pre-Kindergarten 4 is reported on a semester basis, or two times a year, in January and June. An in-person parent/guardian conference is required to be offered at least once annually, but teachers and parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to request additional conferences as needed. More regular forms of communication such as interim progress reports, phone calls, e-mails, and letters are strongly encouraged to create a relationship of trust and transparency. For students consistently not meeting academic expectations, discussions should focus on interventions, remedial services, and future placement.

Prekindergarten 3-year-old and 4-year-old Report Cards
Report cards for Prekindergarten 3 and 4 utilize a grading for learning approach and communicate academic performance and personal development using the following marking codes:
- E – Exceeds Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- M – Meets Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- W – Working Toward Meeting Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- N – Not Yet Meeting Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- X – Not Evaluated At This Time

Kindergarten – Grade 2 Report Cards
Report cards for Kindergarten through Second Grade utilize a grading for learning approach and communicate academic performance using the following marking codes:
- E – Exceeds Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- M – Meets Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- W – Working Toward Meeting Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- N – Not Yet Meeting Grade-Level Diocesan Standards
- X – Not Evaluated At This Time

Report cards for Kindergarten through Second Grade communicate learner behaviors using the following marking codes:
- N – Needs Improvement
- I – Improving
- S – Satisfactory
- E - Exemplary

Special content areas such as art, computer technology, music, and physical education are taught less frequently than other subject areas. In order to provide adequate time for assessment, report card grades for special content areas are communicated in marking periods two and four.

Grade 3 – Grade 8 Report Cards

Third through Eighth Grade utilize a percentile grade for all subject areas. While the percentile is not categorized as a letter grade for reporting purposes, the letter grade most closely associated with the percentiles are:

A	93.0-100.0	Excellent, far exceeds standards
A-	90.0-92.9	
B+	87.1-89.9	
B	83.0-87.0	Good, above average
B-	80.0-82.9	
C+	77.1-79.9	
C	73.0-77.0	Satisfactory, meets standards
C-	70.0-72.9	
D	65.0-69.9	Unsatisfactory, does not meet standards
F	below 65.0	Failure, lacks understanding and ability to apply skills

Assignment grades for students in Third through Eighth Grade will be reported using the following breakdown:
- 50% - Projects, Tests, and Quizzes
- 35% - Classwork
- 15% - Homework

The classroom teacher, under the supervision of the principal, has full discretion of how to categorize an assignment.

Report cards for Third through Eighth Grade communicate learner behaviors using the following marking codes:
- N – Needs Improvement
- I – Improving
- S – Satisfactory
- E - Exemplary

Special content areas such as art, computer technology, music, and physical education are taught less frequently than other subject areas. In order to provide adequate time for assessment, report card grades for special content areas are communicated in marking periods two and four.

Grade 6 – Grade 8 Honor Rolls
Students in grades six, seven, and eighth are eligible for High Honor Roll and Honor Roll each marking period. The qualifications for honor roll are:

High Honor Roll (HHR)
- Minimum 95.0 in core subjects (Religion, ELA, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) and 85.0 in all (subjects not included in the core subject calculation)

Honor Roll (HR)
- Minimum 85.0 in core subjects (Religion, ELA, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) and 80.0 in all (subjects not included in the core subject calculation)

However, to be eligible for High Honor Roll or Honor Roll, a student must have no N's (Need Improvement) on the Learner Behavior section of the report card.

Final Course Grades
In third through eighth grade, the final course grade is an average of the four marking period grades.

Student Placement
The placement of a child in a particular grade is an important part of the educational process. Each school principal uses every available means to identify an individual student's learning needs. Final acceptance of a new student does not occur until previous school records have been reviewed and the student has been evaluated. The methods of evaluation are at the discretion of the school principal. All potential kindergarten students are involved in a screening process to determine readiness for kindergarten. Additional evaluations may be necessary in subsequent years. Students who do not successfully complete the course of study in a major content area (Religion, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and/or Social Studies) are required to complete an approved summer school program in order to advance to the next grade level. Grade retention is not common practice, yet may be required if it is in the best interest of the student, family, and/or school. In such circumstances, frequent communication between the principal, teacher(s), and parent(s)/guardian(s) should occur with the final decision authorized by the principal. The written recommendation for grade retention is made by the Principal. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to submit a written statement with the principal's recommendation. If a student has not completed the necessary coursework required for commencement they will be given a certificate of attendance at the time of commencement. Upon completion of the coursework through an approved summer school program, the certificate of achievement/diploma is issued.

Student Records
It is the responsibility of the principal to oversee the annual completion of all students' records in consultation with the Department of Catholic Schools.

TIME ALLOTMENT GUIDELINES
Based on New York State and Diocesan Instructional Requirements

The time allocations outlined below serve as a recommendation for the allocation of weekly minutes of instructional time. As the instructional leader, the classroom teacher has the authority to adjust instructional time allotments as needed, and is highly encouraged to do so in order to meet student needs.

For guidance purposes, only, the DCS provides the following suggested time allocations, based on a six-hour school day that includes 280 weekly minutes for specials, and daily allocations for a 40-minute lunch, 20-minute recess, and 4-minute flex time for announcements and/or transitions.

Subject	Grade								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English Language Arts	450	450	420	300	300	300	200	200	200
Reading/Literature	*320*	*290*	*260*	*150*	*150*	*150*	*80*	*80*	*80*
Writing	*90*	*120*	*120*	*110*	*110*	*110*	*80*	*80*	*80*
Spelling/Conventions	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*	*40*
Mathematics	390	390	420	300	300	300	200	200	200
Religion	120	120	120	200	200	200	200	200	200
Speaking/Listening	*40*	*40*	*40*	*60*	*60*	*60*	*60*	*60*	*60*
Science	120	120	120	200	200	200	200	200	200
Investigations	*40*	*40*	*40*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*
Social Studies	120	120	120	200	200	200	200	200	200
Reading/Research	*40*	*40*	*40*	*60*	*60*	*60*	*40*	*40*	*40*
Writing	*40*	*40*	*40*	*60*	*60*	*60*	*40*	*40*	*40*
Physical Education	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Health/Wellness	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Music	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Technology	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Visual Arts	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Library/Information Literacy	40	40	40	40	40	40	--	--	--
Language Other Than English	--	--	--	--	--	--	200	200	200
Total	1480	1480	1480	1480	1480	1480	1480	1480	1480