

*Network of Sacred Heart Schools
Formation to Mission Plan*

Preamble

Schools of the Sacred Heart have a very specific mission expressed in the *Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Education*. Formation to this mission is one of the most important charges Sacred Heart educators have today.

The ultimate aim of Formation to Mission is commitment to live out the values of Sacred Heart education and to integrate them into the fabric of personal and school life. Intentional formation empowers the adults to be bearers of this mission and to assume their responsibility to foster its transmission to the next generation.

The Formation to Mission Committee of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools offers school leadership the elements of a plan to educate the adults in the school community to this mission. The assumptions and essential elements apply to all schools in the Network. Each school community will adopt models and strategies to shape its program in the context of its history and current institutional needs.

Rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, our Sacred Heart mission evolves through the experience of those who live it in the present and share it with succeeding generations. Relying on the grace of the Spirit, each school becomes a community where the presence of God is experienced and made known.

(accepted by Membership 4/26/08)

FORMATION TO MISSION

The term **Formation to Mission** within Network schools refers to an ongoing plan for the *education of adults* to the essential elements of the culture of Sacred Heart.

Dimensions of this Formation

- awakening and deepening one's personal relationship with a loving God symbolized by the Heart of Christ.
- understanding the vision of Sacred Heart education as expressed in the *Goals and Criteria*.
- integrating the inherent values expressed in the *Goals and Criteria* in one's self-understanding as an adult in the Sacred Heart community
- modeling these values in the public sphere
- empowering others to claim their own relationship with God

Operating Assumptions

- The school implements an ongoing plan for educating its adult community in the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education. (Goal IV: Criterion 4)
- Programs include all adult members of the Sacred Heart community, whatever their roles and responsibilities
- Programs empower adults to be bearers of the mission.
- **Formation to Mission** includes and is the responsibility of the entire community.
 - É Initiating the implementation of this process is the responsibility of the Head of School.
 - É The Head of School identifies personnel and structures for developing and implementing the ongoing plan for **Formation to Mission**.
 - É The Network of Sacred Heart Schools provides resources to support **Formation to Mission**.
 - É Orientation and formation programs demand sustained focus and design.
 - É Each school designs programs in light of its unique situation and environment.
 - É Programs are rooted within the regular routine of school life.
 - É Schools design specific formation programs for adults new to the community.
- Full participation within the Network enhances strong Sacred Heart School communities.
- Integration of the values of Sacred Heart education into the fabric of personal and school life is the ultimate aim of **Formation to Mission**.

Essential Elements

- The **Formation to Mission** program in Sacred Heart schools contains certain essential elements:
 - É careful ongoing reflection on the *Goals and Criteria* for Sacred Heart education in the United States within each school and within the Network.
 - É study of the spirituality, heritage, traditions, and current lived reality of the international Society of the Sacred Heart.
 - É ongoing review of Chapter documents and the writings of our founding mothers, Religious of the Sacred Heart and contemporary Sacred Heart educators.
 - É active reflection on, dialogue about, and critique of the current practice of Sacred Heart education in order to deepen and strengthen the mission as we respond to the evolving needs of the world.
 - É study of the history and uniqueness of one's own school.

TRUSTEES

Operating Assumptions Regarding Trustees

- All trustees are responsible to hold in trust the *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart education.
- Trustees participate in ongoing education to the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.
- Trustees commit themselves to deepening their understanding of and commitment to the *Goals and Criteria* by examining the implication of board decisions and policies as well as allocation of resources.
- Each board's Committee on Trustees will assume responsibility to assure this commitment through the selection, orientation and ongoing education of trustees.

Selection of Trustees

- Thoughtful selection of Sacred Heart trustees is essential in ensuring the school's mission. Stewardship of the *Goals and Criteria* calls for the following characteristics:
 - É understanding of, support of and capacity to be responsible for the mission of Sacred Heart education
 - É evidence in their personal and professional lives of a commitment to the spirit of the *Goals and Criteria*
 - É willingness to exercise their responsibilities as board members according to the *Goals and Criteria*

Orientation of New Trustees

- The Chair, the Head and the Committee on Trustees will ensure that the orientation program for new trustees includes:
 - É in-depth discussion of the mission the board holds in trust as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States* (inclusive of Foundational Principles, the goals and their criteria)
 - É explanation of the accountability of the school for this mission through the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG) process
 - É exposition of the heritage of Sacred Heart education
 - É explanation of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools
 - É expectation to participate within the first two years of service in the Network New Trustee training.

Selection and Formation of the Board Chair

- Thoughtful selection of the board chair is essential in ensuring the school's mission. Stewardship of the *Goals and Criteria* calls for the following characteristics in the chair of the board:
 - É an understanding of and support for the mission of the school and Sacred Heart education
 - É the capacity to lead the board in its responsibility to hold this mission in trust
 - É a commitment to ongoing formation in his or her role as leader.
- The Board Chair works in partnership with the Head of School in order to ensure the formation of the board of trustees.

HEADS OF SCHOOL

Operating Assumptions Regarding Head of School

The Head of School is responsible to hold in trust the *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart education. Modeling these values in the public sphere, the Head ensures that the school's Formation to Mission program facilitates the understanding within the total school community of the vision of Sacred Heart education as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States* (inclusive of Foundational Principles, the goals and their criteria)

The Head empowers members of the school community to claim their own relationship with God and to integrate the inherent values expressed in the *Goals and Criteria* in their own self-understanding as active members of the Sacred Heart community.

The Head participates in ongoing education to the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education and requires that members of the school community participate in this same **Formation to Mission** program. Committed to deepening her/his understanding of and commitment to the *Goals and Criteria*, the Head works closely with the Board and the Administration to ensure that programs, decisions and school policies reflect the values inherent in the *Goals and Criteria*.

The Head works closely with the Board Chair and Committee on Trustees in the selection, orientation and ongoing education of trustees. The Head and Chair plan board meetings to ensure that in-depth discussion of the mission the board holds in trust occurs regularly and consistently. Together the Head and Chair remind the trustees that the school is accountable for this mission through the SHCOG process.

The Head works closely with the administration in the selection, orientation and ongoing education of all employees. Together they develop specific characteristics in the selection of faculty and staff that enable the candidate and the school leaders to understand the depth of the candidate's understanding of, support of and capacity to be responsible for the mission of Sacred Heart education.

Selection of Head of School

Thoughtful selection of the Head of a Sacred Heart school is essential in ensuring the school's mission. Stewardship of the *Goals and Criteria* call for the following characteristics:

- understanding of, support of and capacity to be responsible for the mission of Sacred Heart education;
- evidence in one's personal and professional life of a commitment to the spirit of the *Goals and Criteria*;
- willingness to exercise her/his responsibilities according to the *Goals and Criteria*;
- commitment to one's own formation as a Sacred Heart educator and capacity to implement a **Formation to Mission** program for the members of the school community;
- capacity to lead the school community in its responsibility to hold this mission in trust.

Orientation of New Head of School

The Chair and Board of Trustees will ensure that the new Head participate in a strong orientation program. The Network and the Province will provide assistance in this program. Essential elements of this program include:

- discussion of the development, evolution and role of the *Goals and Criteria* in the life of each Sacred Heart school;
- exposition of the spirituality and heritage of Sacred Heart education;
- explanation of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools and its programs and resources;
- expectation to participate within the first two years of service in the Network's Retreat Program and other orientation and formation programs and resources (www.sofie.org);
- participation in the Network Heads Mentor Program.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Operating Assumptions Regarding Faculty and Staff

- Faculty and staff model the values of the *Goals and Criteria* of Sacred Heart.
- Faculty and staff participate in ongoing education to the heritage and mission of Sacred Heart education.
- Faculty and staff commit themselves to reflecting on and deepening their understanding of and commitment to the *Goals and Criteria* through their teaching and/or other professional responsibilities.
- Those involved in hiring assume responsibility to assure this commitment as they educate new faculty and staff.
- Participation in programs offered by the Network of Sacred Heart Schools enhances formation to mission.

Selection and Hiring of Faculty and Staff

Significant qualities in the selection of faculty and staff are:

- the candidate's understanding of, support of and capacity to be responsible for the mission of Sacred Heart education.
- the candidate's ability to communicate a consistency of his/her educational philosophy with the philosophy of Sacred Heart education as expressed in the *Goals and Criteria*.
- the candidate's professional competency and the willingness to be formed in the mission.
- the candidate's willingness to support the Christ-centered identity of the school.

Orientation of New Faculty and Staff

- New employees need a mission-focused orientation program in addition to what is provided for returning employees.
- Effective orientation is ongoing and continues throughout the first years of employment.
- Orientation includes a mentoring component.

Ongoing Education of Faculty and Staff in Light of their Responsibility for Mission

- **Formation to Mission** emphasizes spirituality, community and the relational aspect of Sacred Heart education.
- Formation of teachers includes emphasis on the essential place that inquiry, critical thinking, meaningful dialogue and process play in Sacred Heart education.
- The school provides formation programs that are specifically designed for the needs of non-teaching staff.

PARENTS

Operating Assumptions

- Sacred Heart mission is introduced and explained from the very start of a family's relationship with the school.
- A mutually beneficial relationship is achieved when a new family demonstrates an understanding of the mission of Sacred Heart schools.
- There is an expectation of orientation for new families to the mission of Sacred Heart schools.

NETWORK OF SACRED HEART SCHOOLS

The Network was born of the belief that unity brought strength; that together Sacred Heart schools could achieve more than they could alone; that each school would be energized by the collective presence of the others.

(We Hold in Trust)

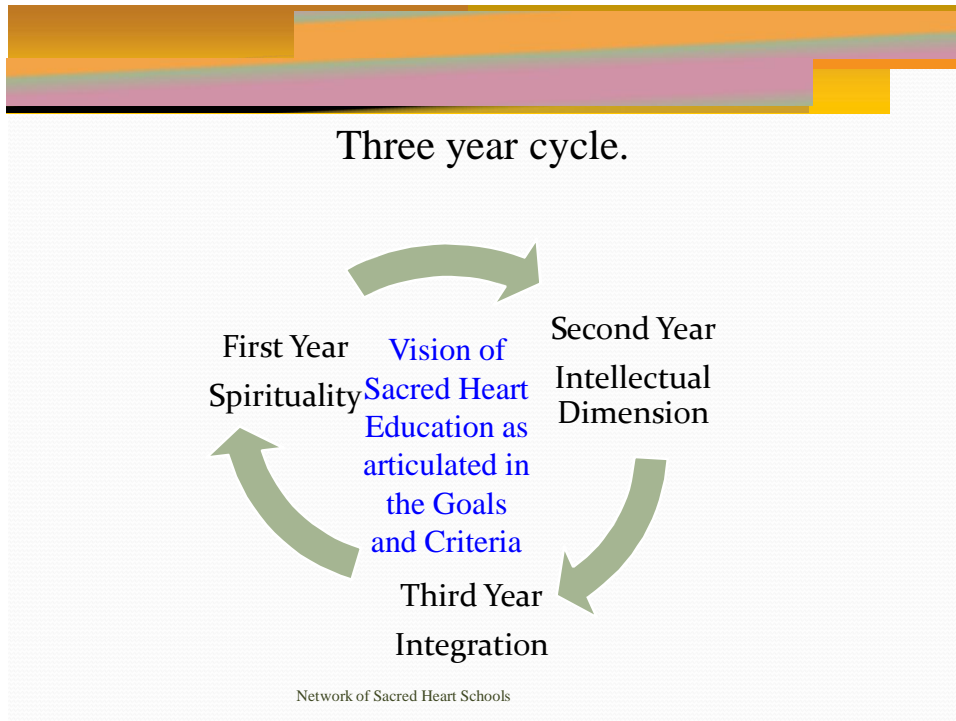
- The Network office will continue to offer technological resources and readings on the mission of Sacred Heart schools, as well as speakers and retreat facilitators who can address the mission.
- The Network Committee on Trustees will coordinate the New Trustee Training in the fall of each year.
- Optimal opportunities will be offered to foster the building of relationships among all Sacred Heart schools.

APPENDIX

Models, Strategies and Resources

Each school will design a program for implementing the preceding assumptions in light of its particular situation. We offer the following models and strategies recognizing that interactive programs that engage people tend to be most effective.

Possible Models



- 1.
2. School Year Model: Formation program is organized around Sacred Heart feasts and school calendar:
 - É August-September ó Holy Spirit
 - É October ó Mater
 - É November ó Philippine
 - É May ó Madeleine Sophie
 - É June ó Sacred Heart
3. Five-Year Model: Formation program is organized around an annual goal (*Goals and Criteria*)
 - É a personal and active faith in God
 - É a deep respect for intellectual values
 - É a social awareness that impels to action
 - É the building of community as a Christian value
 - É personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom
4. Theme Model: Formation program is organized around a selected theme for the year, for example: Stewardship, Social Justice, Community.

Strategies

FOR TRUSTEES

- In structuring board retreats and regular meetings, the Chair, Committee on Trustees and the Head of School provide for a reading program, possibly utilizing the education section of *Journey of the Heart*.
- There is reflection and sharing on the school's mission at board meetings as a means of mutual formation. Some suggestions:
 - É Assign board homework: include selections from *Madeleine Sophie Barat a Life* by Phil Kilroy, RSCJ or *Journey of the Heart* in pre-meeting packet
 - É Invite students/faculty to speak about service activities, significant celebrations of feasts;
 - É Provide prayer experiences as part of board meetings
 - É Continually remind board members that all decisions are made in keeping with the *Goals and Criteria*
 - É Insure that reports to the board are formative i.e., that they reflect the relationship of the topic to mission
 - É Involve students in board prayer and reflection
 - É Assign one goal to each trustee to explain and comment.
- Elements of board retreats might be:
 - É Presentation on Madeleine Sophie in her own context, her goals
 - É Prayer element: centrality of relationship with Jesus Christ;
 - É Presentation of ongoing self-understanding of the Society of the Sacred Heart and its mission in the world.
- Board members participate in formation to mission activities for faculty.
- Board members attend "Keepers of the Flame" workshops.
- A *Goals and Criteria* committee is established and is responsible for ongoing board formation; this committee raises the importance of *Goals and Criteria* education by insuring that sufficient time, well placed, is given to it in the meeting.

Strategies

FOR NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

- Administrators recognize that people are concerned with learning and doing their jobs well in the first year and yet need an operating knowledge of the culture of a Sacred Heart school.
- Programs of orientation for new faculty and staff are created to include the following:
 - É some type of “crash course” provided for new employees over and above the annual orientation of the adult community in each school.
 - É a series of meetings between Orientation week and the close of school. In this way, history, traditions, the Society and Sacred Heart spirituality will be woven in, as each school deems appropriate.
 - É mentors (or a pairing of seasoned, skilled employees with new employees); providing mentors is a valuable way to integrate new members of the community. A mentor program might include:
 - É training mentors the spring before;
 - É providing new faculty and staff with key resources (calendar, www.sofie.org, etc.);
 - É helping new faculty and staff with regular reminders.

Strategies

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

- Each year includes an opening day of retreat inclusive of a commissioning ceremony for all employees.
- Each educator/employee develops a goal for the year (to be included in the annual review process) related to Formation to Mission.
- All meetings begin with reading(s) from our Mothersö and include some type of reflective time for that reading.
- The person or team responsible for Formation to Mission provides resources to members of the adult community prior to major feasts and seasons.
- Adult members of the school community are encouraged to integrate Formation to Mission in their ongoing work of professional development.
- Communications include questions for reflection, resources, links, etc.
- At year's end the entire community engages in a review of how the community has fostered Formation to Mission.
- All faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in the Network retreat, öRoots that give us Wings.ö
- Faculty and staff are encouraged to attend regional and national gatherings of Sacred Heart educators.
- The person or team responsible for Formation to Mission facilitates discussion of the development, evolution and role of the *Goals and Criteria* in the life of each Sacred Heart school.
- There is a communal prayer component at each community gathering.
- Mentoring programs utilize experienced faculty/staff members.
- The person or team responsible for Formation to Mission develops and implements units on heritage, traditions, spirituality, the writings of our spiritual mothers and contemporary Sacred Heart educators, etc.
- To develop an understanding of one's own school in relation to evolution of Sacred Heart education, faculty and staff create an historical time line of significant events in the local community and from that identify people who have helped to form the community.
- Faculty and staff learn about the role of the Board of Trustees and their responsibilities for Formation to Mission.
- RSCJ are invited to share their stories and ministries.
- The Executive Director of the Network is invited to educate faculty and staff re: work being done on Formation to Mission.
- The Formation to Mission programs include emphasis on the international dimension of Sacred Heart education.
- All vehicles of communication are used to support Formation to Mission programs.

Strategies

FOR PARENTS

- Information is provided during the admission process to each family regarding the mission of Sacred Heart education and spirituality.
- Each family receives a copy of the *Goals and Criteria* during the admission interview. The Director of Admissions is encouraged to have a discussion with parents about the *Goals and Criteria* before the child is admitted to the school.
- Parents include a statement about why they want their child(ren) to attend a Sacred Heart school as part of the application process.
- Each family receives "Introducing Network of Sacred Heart Schools in the U.S." This brochure includes a map of the Network schools indicating location, make-up of student body, contact information, etc.
- The Head (or his/her designees) explains and discusses the *Goals and Criteria* with new families either individually or in small groups. A copy of the *Goals and Criteria* is distributed.
- Further discussion and conversation continue throughout the year with the Head, Administrative Team and faculty about Sacred Heart heritage, traditions, spirituality and mission at new parent meetings, programs, and events to enhance their awareness and understanding.
- Reflection centered on some aspect of the *Goals and Criteria* and/or Sacred Heart spirituality occurs at every parent meeting throughout the school year.
- At least one opportunity per year is specifically dedicated to spirituality at each school. Topics include the *Goals and Criteria*, history of the Society of the Sacred Heart, traditions, etc. A school may consider inviting an RSCJ to "tell her story."
- Every parent newsletter/communication includes educative material related to some aspect of Sacred Heart spirituality including mission, history and traditions, and its significance. Significant dates on the calendar (Mater in October, Philippine and Janet Erskine Stuart in November, Madeleine Sophie in May, etc.) are explained in each newsletter.
- Parents are educated as to the www.sofie.org website; it is mentioned in each newsletter, and live demonstrations of the website are provided at open house / parent gatherings.

CURRENT RESOURCES

- *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*
- *The Spirit and Plan of Studies*
- *Journey of the Heart*
- archived videos of Network conferences (Each school has a set of CDs/DVDs.)
- ATLAS Professional Learning Community (Curriculum Mapping)
- RESOURCE section on www.sofie.org.

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