

CURRICULUM — INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

The primary goal of the program of instruction in Pueblo Diocesan Catholic Schools is to provide learning experiences which most effectively inculcate worthwhile attitudes and impart the knowledge and skills necessary for the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development of the student.

Colorado State Standards and the Cincinnati or Archdiocese of Denver curriculum should be followed in all Catholic schools.

Preschool Course of Instruction

- The basic program in preschool includes: religion, language, mathematics, personal-social development, social studies, media-art, music, science, and sensory-motor development.
- The basic program in pre-kindergarten includes: religion, communication and language arts, mathematics, self, family and community, science, art, physical education, music and rhythm and technology.
- The underlying instructional strategy in preschool and pre-kindergarten is the use of organized and free-play activities that are intended to provide opportunities for the child to interact, explore and relate successfully in his/her environment.

Elementary School Course of Instruction

- The basic program in kindergarten through grade three should include religion, language arts, mathematics, music, art, and physical education. Concepts of social studies, science, health and safety should be incorporated into the basic program. Use of technology should be integrated into the instructional program. Inclusion of a foreign language is recommended but optional.
- The basic program in grades four through eight should include religion, mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, fine arts, physical education, health and safety. Use of technology should be integrated into the instructional program. Inclusion of a foreign language is recommended but optional.

SUBJECT, TIME ALLOTMENTS

The general time allotment for each subject should be as follows: RECOMMENDED

TIME ALLOTMENT FOR PRIMARY

<u>Subject Area</u>	<u>Minutes Per Week</u>
Religion (daily)	100-125
Language Arts	750
Reading/Phonics	
English	
Spelling — formalized program	
Penmanship — formalized program	
Mathematics	150
Social Studies	150
Health	
Science	
Fine Arts	100
Art	
Music	
Physical Education	150
Organized physical activity	
Recess	
Classroom Management Activities	75

THE SCHOOL DAY BEGINS AND ENDS WITH PRAYER.

RECOMMENDED TIME ALLOTMENT — MIDDLE AND UPPER GRADES

<u>Subject Area</u>	<u>Minutes Per Week</u>
Religion (daily)	150
Language Arts	525
Reading	
English/Composition/Grammar	
Spelling — formalized program	
Penmanship — formalized program to 6 th grade	
Mathematics	225
Social Studies	225
Science	225
Fine Arts	135
Art	
Music	
Physical Education	90
Formalized program	
Organized physical activity	
Classroom Management Activities	75

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TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE CURRICULUM

Principals, with faculty input, may choose textbooks that are best suited for the levels of primary, intermediate and middle school. Textbooks should be selected that best address the Colorado State Standards and the Cincinnati curriculum.

Textbooks should be reviewed on a regular basis. It is recommended that one textbook series be reviewed each year to determine if it is still current or in need of updating.

Additional resources that support the curriculum may be used and are encouraged.

RELIGION PROGRAMS

Textbooks and religious education materials adopted by the school need to be on the USCCB textbook approval list. For assistance with textbook adoptions, contact the Superintendent of Schools.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Sacramental preparation programs are the responsibility of the local parish and are not to be the responsibility of the Catholic school. Students, along with their parents, are to participate in preparation programs and celebrate the sacraments within their own worshipping community.

Students attending Catholic school should not be expected to attend religious education classes. However, the parish may require that they attend a retreat and several classes with religious education students prior to receiving a specific sacrament.

FIELD TRIPS

A field trip is recognized as a valuable extension of the classroom experience. Each school handbook should include guidelines for such trips. In general the following guidelines should be observed:

- The teacher should provide adequate preparation and follow-up for students.
- Parental approval must be obtained in writing. A sample form is included in **Appendix O**. Students who do not have the signed authorized permission form should be excluded from participation in off-campus activities. Verbal permission or permission communicate through e-mail is not acceptable. Permission forms that have been signed and faxed in their entirety are permissible.
- Parents should be informed of the date, purpose, departure time, destination, expense, means of transportation and probable time of return.
- Careful arrangements should be made to provide for students' safety. Colorado state law regarding use of seat belts must be followed. (See **Appendix P**). Volunteer drivers are subject to the diocesan policy regarding background checks. This policy can be found in **Appendix K**.
- School personnel should not be required to transport students in personal vehicles.
- The field trip must be adequately supervised. If parents assist in the supervision, they should receive instructions regarding their responsibilities.

E-MAIL AND INTERNET USE

Each school should develop and publish in the parent/student handbook and faculty handbook a policy regarding e-mail and internet use. A sample policy and consent forms can be found in **Appendix Q**.

A filtering system should be in place that bans access to www.MySpace.com, www.Xanga.com, www.Facebook.com, and similar sites.

All electronic communications to or from any diocesan preschool or elementary school should reflect the educational goals and Christian principles upon which the school is founded.

If e-mail communication between teachers and students is necessary, it should be done on school computers.

All computers at the school are school property. The school reserves the right to view e-mails sent from or to the school and /or any internet sites accessed on school computers.

Model policies suggested by the July 2006 edition of the *School Superintendent's Insider* are as follows:

Students may use the school computer system only for legitimate educational purposes, which include classwork and independent research that is similar to the subjects studied in school. Students shall not access entertainment sites, such as social networking sites or gaming sites, except for legitimate educational purposes under the supervision of a teacher or other professional.

All student use of the school's internet system or personal cell phones or other digital devices used by students while on campus is subject to the provisions of the disciplinary code. Students may not share or post personal information about or images of any other student or staff member without permission from that student or staff member. If a student is found to have used a personal cell phone or digital device in a manner that is not in accord with this acceptable use policy, in addition to other disciplinary actions, the administrator may ban the student's use of any personal cell phone or digital device.

Maintaining or posting material to a web site or blog that threatens a likelihood of substantial disruption in school, including harming or interfering with the rights of other students to participate fully in school or extracurricular activities, is a violation of the student disciplinary code and subject to appropriate penalties herein.

POLITICAL ISSUES

The teaching of political matters should be in accord with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document entitled *Faithful Citizenship*. This document advocates political involvement by studying the issues. Advocating for a specific political stance, party affiliation, political candidate, and/or political agenda, is not to be exercised by faculty, parents and students in the building, in the name of the school or during school sponsored activities.

The posting of political materials in diocesan schools is strictly prohibited.

REPORTING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Academic grades are to be based solely on scholastic achievement as defined by the individual school. Behavior should be evaluated separately.

Teachers have the primary responsibility to confer with parents about the progress of their children. The principal has responsibility to oversee this process.

In cases involving ongoing problems or serious concerns which may lead to action beyond the scope of the teacher's responsibilities, the principal should be included in the conference with the parents.

Report cards, standardized test scores and parent-teacher conferences, should provide parents with tangible evidence of student progress.

When semester and/or quarter failure in a particular subject seems likely, parents should be promptly notified in advance of the probable failure.

Unless otherwise defined by the local school, the grading standard for schools within the Diocese of Pueblo is as follows:

93-100	A
85-92	B
77-84	C
70-76	D
69 and below	F

Disciplinary measures should not be reflected in academic grades. According to the local school policy, credit may or may not be given for work completed during unexcused absences or suspension.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The teacher is expected to meet periodically with the parents of each student for the purpose of discussing the student's development and progress in school. The student may be present for all or part of the conferences according to school policy or at the discretion of the teacher.

Designated conference days may be considered contact days, provided students are required to attend all or part of the conference.

Unless specifically prohibited by court order, the non-custodial parent has the right to the same information and opportunities for conferences provided for the custodial parent.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Promotion of students should be based on completion of academic work and mastery of academic skills. Credit for courses should not be given solely on the basis of class attendance.

All decisions regarding retention are the responsibility of the principal in consultation with the teacher(s). A decision such as this should only be made after frequent parent- teacher conferences throughout the school year.

In cases of slow progress, each student should be considered individually. Any decision concerning non-promotion must be made after considering all the factors related to the student's development (emotional, physical, social as well as intellectual and academic) collected from a wide range of sources throughout the year. Excessive absences and/or tardies may be cause for retention or withdrawal from the school as defined in the local school handbook.

No student should be retained more than one year at any given grade or level. Ordinarily, a student should not be retained more than once while in grades K-8.

Local school policy should define the extent to which they can serve students with special needs.

TESTING PROGRAM

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is the test currently used in most Catholic schools throughout the nation. Some Catholic schools, however, do use other standardized tests in their schools.

The Diocese of Pueblo does not mandate a particular standardized testing program. Rather, each school may select a standardized testing program that best evaluates student progress.

Regardless of the test used, individual student's test scores should be made available to their parents and teachers. Test results should be used as a way to improve instruction and to assist students in strengthening areas of weakness. School principals may make their schools' test scores available to parents and teachers.

RETENTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RECORDS

Teacher grade books along with attendance records are to be kept by the school for five years.