Saint Joseph School

Shreveport, Louisiana

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School Accreditation Engagement Review

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Cognia Continuous Improvement System

Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." The Cognia Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic, fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. Cognia expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions.

The findings of the Engagement Review Team are organized by the ratings from the Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic and the Levels of Impact within the i3 Rubric: Initiate, Improve, and Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency of stakeholders in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the process of monitoring and adjusting the administrations of the desired practices, processes, or programs for quality and fidelity. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey toward the collection, analysis, and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. Enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting these Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results come from the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (a minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and to demonstrate over time the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact,** where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within its culture. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that yield results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal in leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the Cognia Accreditation Process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the accreditation process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against the research-based Cognia Performance Standards. Review teams use these Standards to assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. Cognia provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions, which helps to focus and guide each institution's improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also are obtained through interviews, surveys, and additional activities.

Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

The Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the Cognia Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity,** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by color. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Insufficient	Identifies areas with insufficient evidence or evidence that indicated little or no activity leading toward improvement
Yellow	Initiating	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Improving	Pinpoints quality practices that are improving and meet the Standards
Blue	Impacting	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that positively impact the institution

Under each Standard statement is a row indicating the scores related to the elements of Cognia's i3 Rubric. The rubric is scored from one (1) to four (4). A score of four on any element indicates high performance, while a score of one or two indicates an element in need of improvement. The following table provides the key to the abbreviations of the elements of the i3 Rubric.

Element	Abbreviation
Engagement	EN
Implementation	IM
Results	RE
Sustainability	SU
Embeddedness	EM

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards										Rating
1.1	The institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	4
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3
1.3	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	4
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	3	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	4
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.									Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.									Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	4
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	2
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	4

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships, high expectations and standards, a challenging and engaging curriculum, quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful, and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards										Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	2
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
2.4	The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers who support their educational experiences.									Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	4
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	2
2.6	The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.									Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	1	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
2.8	The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.									Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3
2.9	The institution implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.									Initiating
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	2
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.									Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3

Learning Capacity Standards											Rating
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning.										Initiating
	EN:	4	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	1	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	2	
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.										Initiating
	EN:	2	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	2	

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably, so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Standards											Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3	
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.										Improving
	EN:	3	**IM:**	2	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	1	**EM:**	3	
3.3	The institution provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	4	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	3	
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	4	**IM:**	4	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	
3.5	The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
3.6	The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution.										Improving
	EN:	4	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	2	**SU:**	2	**EM:**	3	
3.7	The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction.										Impacting
	EN:	3	**IM:**	3	**RE:**	3	**SU:**	3	**EM:**	4	

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
3.8	The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	3

Assurances

Assurances are statements that accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution, and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances Met		
YES	NO	If No, List Unmet Assurances by Number Below
X		

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®

Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. Cognia provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. This formative tool for improvement identifies areas of success and areas in need of focus. The IEQ comprises the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provide information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the Findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus their improvement efforts on those Standards within that level. An IEQ in the range of 225–300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all Cognia Improvement Network (CIN) institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual CIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Institution IEQ	295.00	CIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33

Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, with examples of programs and practices, and suggestions for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team's deliberations and analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution organized by the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The narrative also provides the next steps to guide the institution's improvement journey in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

The Engagement Review Team identified themes aligned to the continuous improvement process at St. Joseph's in Shreveport, Louisiana. The themes present both strengths and opportunities to guide the improvement journey the school is actively pursuing. Interviews and a study of artifacts, produced supporting evidence for each theme. Given the COVID pandemic, this review was facilitated remotely and did not allow classroom observations to occur. Therefore, ratings from the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (eleot) did not inform the standards ratings.

St. Joseph School is committed to a faith-based culture that develops attitudes, skills, and beliefs needed for student success. This culture provides a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and parents, and has established high expectations for all students. During interviews with all stakeholder groups, the school's culture was identified as being that of a "family." As a result, learners feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and are supported by their teachers and peers. Using surveys and interviews during the stakeholder groups, the team noted that the faith-based culture at the school is deeply ingrained in the day-to-day activities, communications, and relationships between the students, the parents, and their teachers. In addition, the institution has implemented a "Virtue" a month in which they learn about a virtue, a saint that exhibited those traits, and a Bible verse. This church and school initiative has bolstered positive relationships with students and the adults that interact with them. All stakeholders agree that this culture has the greatest impact on the spiritual, emotional, and academic development of the whole child and has developed attitudes, skills, and beliefs needed for student success both in school and out of school. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6) The team encourages the institution to continue their excellent work in this area and suggests they collect the survey results longitudinally so data can support and celebrate their success.

The changes in leadership model more closely reflects the current needs of the institution. St. Joseph School has experienced recent changes in leadership that has resulted in a shift of thinking. The evaluation team recognizes these changes to be positive and forward looking and will help carry St. Joseph into the future. The engagement team experienced the commitment of Mr. Clayton Cobb and Mrs. Katherine Suckle as well as their positive working relationship. All stakeholders indicated that they have a welcomed and effective relationship that is seen to be a strong asset to the school and its community. The engagement team observed that the school leadership has begun and should continue to put policies and procedures in place that will ensure the vitality of curriculum and instruction, data collection, and communication with all stakeholders. Stakeholder groups agree that a two-way communication system is highly evident, and all feel comfortable in sharing their concerns and know that it will be addressed. Leadership is intentionally reviewing the available funding to maximize allocation of resources to align the mission of the institution for the success of all learners. (1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 3.4, 3.8) The team suggests expanding leadership opportunities for staff modelled on their outstanding work as building administrators.

St. Joseph School has a well-established culture in which pride for the school is highly evident in the efforts of the community to keep the school open amidst personnel and pandemic challenges. Interviews confirmed that there has been a commitment to the school for many years to protect its culture. Even in the trials with changes of leadership and a future that was not defined, parents and teachers supported the common goal of excellent academic opportunities for the students. The committed goal of the school has been to do for others. The Virtues program has brought this one step further and has permeated all that the school does. In the student interview when asked if they could spend money on the school, their replies were to donate the money for others that could not attend, pay for a teacher salary increase, make improvements to the school structures, and increase the size of the church so that more could come to worship. (1.2, 1.8) The team suggests that data be collected to document these positive practices and analyzed over time so improvements can be made if necessary.

St. Joseph School has begun to establish a defined curriculum through program purchases to improve operational effectiveness and shared understanding of effective teaching practices. Increased professional development concerning differentiation and engagement strategies will address the implementation of differentiated instruction. After realizing there was a need, the current SJS administration purchased curriculum programs to provide a consistent base for the school in different content areas. Teachers are able to pull in additional supplemental resources as they deem necessary. As more data is being collected and analyzed, the team suggests that professional development could be obtained that will be brought onto campus to benefit all of the staff instead of a few being sent to a national conference. (2.2, 2.5, 2.12)

St. Joseph School has established academic programs to serve the needs of its learners based on Catholic identity but currently lacks the capacity to meet the individualized learning needs of subgroups and at-risk students. SJS utilizes various different digital resources to address reading, math inadequacies, ie. Star Reading, Star Math, IXL, Reflex, to name a few. Teachers assign these resources for homework assignments and to fill in learning gaps. However, there is not a person or department currently in place to address students who have learning issues (dysgraphia, dyscalculia, etc) and need additional supports. There is also a population of the school that is ESL and the teachers are not properly trained to address their specific needs. Obtaining professional development that addresses learning differences and ESL will benefit the entire campus.

A common theme of improvement for St. Joseph School is an intentional use of data. Data are collected through various purchased programs; however, systems for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to align with continuous improvement goals are not in place to assist the school with informed decision-making. The goal of transitioning to a school who makes intentional data driven decisions to meet the needs of the whole child needs to be a top priority of improvement. It is not clear how student data was being used to guide instruction. Essentially, connecting all the components that are already in place but may be undocumented or not in a full implementation state. It is not only important to collect data to drive instruction, improvement opportunities, etc., but to know what to do with the data to disaggregate, analyze, drive decisions and report to families, leadership, and school stakeholders. There is no defined system, documentation, or expectation of daily instruction to differentiate and personalize learning opportunities to ensure all learners' needs are being met. (2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 2.10) The team suggests that data be made a priority for professional development to increase overall capacity for the professional staff.

St. Joseph School commits to shared values and beliefs to ensure student outcomes are positive but lacks close alignment of current goals to longitudinal data that are sometimes informally collected but not analyzed to make informed decisions to improve student learning and operational effectiveness. Lack of data collection, usage, and analysis was a common weakness reported by administration and instructional staff. There are some basic beginning stages of data collection, but those are not effectively being used to drive decision making or academic programming for students. There should be a direct correlation and connection between the benchmark testing and the other programs that the school is utilizing. Continuous progress monitoring should occur. There should be a fluid systematic approach to collecting data and using it to guide the

existing individual support for each child. There seems to be a significant amount of anecdotal evidence that could possibly be used as data moving forward. In order to make this a viable option that is useful in planning, development, and to guide decision making, it is recommended that professional development and structured PLC's be developed so that a unified approach to data collection and analysis will be utilized for the school. (1.8, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11)

Professional development must be available for all teachers and systematically implemented and monitored to ensure effective practices become embedded in the instructional routine. The training and implementation of a formalized professional development plan and a professional learning community starts with data analysis and networking is not evident at SJS. There is a need for implementation of structured PLCs to meet regularly to identify and address school wide initiatives. A formal professional development plan should include staff training on the analysis and use of data to improve and differentiate instruction and facilitate the scaffolding of curriculum to meet the needs of all students. The consistent school wide use of data to guide instructional practice will have a direct impact on student achievement. Potential evidence of a professional development plan could include examples of analyzed evaluation results from professional learning activities, development of Professional Learning Committees, analyzed student performance results and shared leadership opportunities in the classroom. (2.7, 2.11, 2.12, 3.1, 3.2) The team suggests an increased focus on the needs and implementation for strong professional development. Along those lines, as resources become available the exploration of an intervention coach would serve to benefit identified stakeholders at St. Joseph School. This was a topic that was brought up in both the leadership and teacher interviews. This intervention position could support the teachers in the classroom activities so that they are able to add to their daily activities and support students that need additional interventions for success. (2.1, 2.7, 2.9)

To conclude, St. Joseph School should be commended for the successful way that the stakeholders are mission focused. This focus has led to actions that consistently improved students' learning, creating a sense of community, and led to the development of programs that will address the needs of students by educating the whole person. New leadership has worked together with the school community to ensure that the institutional goals are the foundation of all aspects of school life, while simultaneously maintaining high academic standards and appreciating the rich traditions of a Catholic school education. The team recommends that the institution continue to apply that same type of focused process to all initiatives including the recommendations made by the team. SJS and all stakeholders should celebrate the success of their school community and continue the current path for continuous improvement.

Next Steps

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report, the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the areas for improvement identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.
- Continue the improvement journey.

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and expertise. To provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes, all Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members are required to complete Cognia training. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography (Lead Evaluator Only)
Jill Grabert, Lead Evaluator	Mrs. Jill Grabert has been involved in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of New Orleans for the past 32 years. She is currently the principal at St. Cletus Catholic School in Gretna, Louisiana. She previously served as principal at St. Matthew the Apostle in River Ridge, Louisiana. Before becoming principal, she was assistant principal of Academics at Archbishop Blenk High School for four years. Jill has taught various grades for 13 years. She has served on several Engagement Review Teams and has been a Lead Evaluator for the past eight years. Jill has a B.A. in elementary education from Florida Atlantic University and a M.Ed. in educational leadership from the University of New Orleans.
Carol DeWeese, Lead Evaluator Cognia **Auburn Keaveney,** Improvement Services Specialist Congia **Anne Silburn,** Westminister Christian Academy, Opelousas Middle School/Upper School Principal, Director of Academics	

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