

# STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DIOCESE OF GARY

June 2010

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following individuals and groups for their support throughout the conduct of this case study:

- **Bishop Dale Melczek, for his openness and willingness to allow others to learn from his Diocese's example.**
- **The pastors, associate pastors, and diocesan staff of the Diocese of Gary who willingly shared their insights and expertise.**
- **Ms. Anne Verbeke, Offices of Lay Ministry Formation and Parish Pastoral Councils, for serving as the Diocesan point of contact for the case study.**
- **Michael Brough, Peter Denio, and the staff and members of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management for initiating the project and lending expertise to production of the case study.**

THIS PUBLICATION WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK. THE STATEMENTS MADE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHOR.

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# Standards for Excellence Implementation in the Diocese of Gary

## A CASE STUDY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2007, The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management invited the Diocese of Gary to consider implementing the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Catholic Sector. After nearly three years of project efforts, both stakeholders stood to benefit from a systematic, data-informed assessment of the Standards for Excellence initiative. At the request of the Leadership Roundtable, from January through April 2010 a faculty member at the University of Notre Dame conducted a participatory, stakeholder informed case study of the implementation process and its short term impacts. Archival materials, a local survey of pastors, and several semi-structured interviews with key project stakeholders contributed to the case study analysis.

Part one of the findings delineates a project narrative that traces the arc of the initiative through several key milestones and key project actors. The narrative and timeline depict the evolution of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary to understand it as an instrumental case.

Part two of the findings focuses on implementation assessment, a more evaluative approach, geared toward assessing impact and discerning strengths and challenges. The major thematic areas addressed as part of the implementation assessment are:

- *Awareness and Effort:* Ninety percent of priests are familiar with the initiative. Fifty-five percent indicated a high level of effort toward Standards implementation, while 27% reported medium effort and 18% reported low effort.
- *Perceptions of Impact:* Survey results revealed statistically significant pre- vs. post changes in attention toward five out of eight areas addressed by the Standards. All areas, however, demonstrated an increase, indicating that these principles have been more fully addressed/implemented since the adoption of the Standards for Excellence.
- *Need and Value:* The Standards establish a needed common ground; contribute to improved practice; are built upon and are executed within a consultative and collaborative environment, and; exhibit great synergy with diocesan efforts focused on human resource development.
- *Challenges:* Concerns arose regarding accountability within Standards implementation; training and ongoing support; and customization of Standards for Excellence.

Recommendations for improved practice are presented, including: a needed review of the literature base on implementation research; a renewed and reframed project booster shot; and a refined, Standards-based accountability mechanism.

## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

### Purpose

The purpose of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management is to promote best practices in the management, finances, and human resources development of Catholic Church entities in the U.S. This issue is significant as the Catholic Church in the U.S. has an operating budget of over \$100 billion, employs over a million people, and has a substantial impact on the social services, education, and healthcare provision for tens of millions of citizens of all religious persuasions and those unaffiliated with any formal or informal denomination.

The Leadership Roundtable's Standards for Excellence program is a national initiative to promote the highest standards of ethics, accountability, and good stewardship in Catholic Church management and operations. In their operations,

...dioceses, parishes and Catholic nonprofits must comply with the Church's own canon law as well as applicable local, state, and federal laws. The Standards for Excellence build upon that foundation, and go a step further. Based on fundamental values - such as honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, compassion, responsibility, and accountability - the Standards for Excellence describe how Catholic dioceses, parishes and nonprofits should act to be ethical and accountable in their program operations, governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising. (About the Standards for Excellence, 2010)

Eight guiding principles encapsulate how Catholic organizations should operate to ensure ethics and accountability in program operations, governance, human resources, financial management, and fundraising. The principles are accompanied by 55 standards, which are more detailed performance benchmarks to allow parishes to strengthen their operations (see Appendix 1). The Standards

...have been produced to present an appropriate level of ethical and accountable practices for Catholic parishes. They respond to the call to good stewardship and accountability in the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. The Standards serve as a model for parishes to implement in their operations and governance. (National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, 2007, pp. 2-3)

The tremendous resources of the Church have not always been accompanied by excellence in the areas of planning, leadership development, personnel development, and financial transparency and accountability. Toward that end, the Leadership Roundtable has engaged in consultative and strategic planning services in several dioceses, and has facilitated implementation of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary, IN. Appendix 2 contains a brief demographic portrait of the Diocese of Gary.

Under the leadership of Bishop Dale Melczek, the Diocese of Gary is the first diocese in the nation to pilot test and implement the Standards for Excellence. As a relatively new initiative still in its early developmental stages, both the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management and the Diocese of Gary stand to benefit from a systematic, data-informed assessment of the Standards for

Excellence initiative. Thus, a few basic research questions specified the foci and parameters of this case study.

- What has been the developmental progression of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary, including key project actors, important project milestones, and valuable lessons learned?
- What have been the immediate outcomes of the Standards for Excellence initiative in terms of awareness and effort, perceived degree of impact, stated value, and encountered challenges?

## Approach

Using a participatory and user-focused approach, the case study documents how the Diocese has utilized the Standards for Excellence and whether/how these approaches have contributed to improved management practices and procedures. To reiterate, the case study was approached with user-focused end goals in mind. That is, the case study was proposed and designed to offer valuable insights both to the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management and the actual implementation site, the Diocese of Gary. Tenets and approaches guiding this work have their roots in participatory, community-based research (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Stoeker, 2005), action research (Frabutt, Holter, & Nuzzi, 2008; Johnson, 2008), and collaborative evaluation (O'Sullivan, 2004).

Typically, these modes of inquiry rely on partnership and dialogue between the case study researcher and the principal actors within the case study environment. Practically speaking, both the Leadership Roundtable and diocesan representatives were consulted for: a) delineation of overarching research questions; b) specification of the case study design; c) interpretation of archival documents and records; d) creation of interview questions and survey items; and e) preliminary interpretation of case study findings. This model of ongoing, bi-directional communication ensures that the final product represents a fusion of objective, third-party inquiry, sound social science methodology, and practitioner-informed wisdom and insight.

## METHOD

### Participants

Participants in this case study were major stakeholders (see Figure 1) in the design, customization, dissemination, and implementation of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary.

### Semi-structured Interviews

In the social sciences, semi-structured interviews allow for the systematic, formalized collection of qualitative data (Barbour & Schostak, 2005). These interviews were conducted with nine key stakeholders in the Diocese of Gary: a) the Bishop; b) the Standards for Excellence Coordinator; c) the Manager of Human Resources; d) the Director of Finance; d) three pastors; and e) two members of the Diocesan Lay Council.

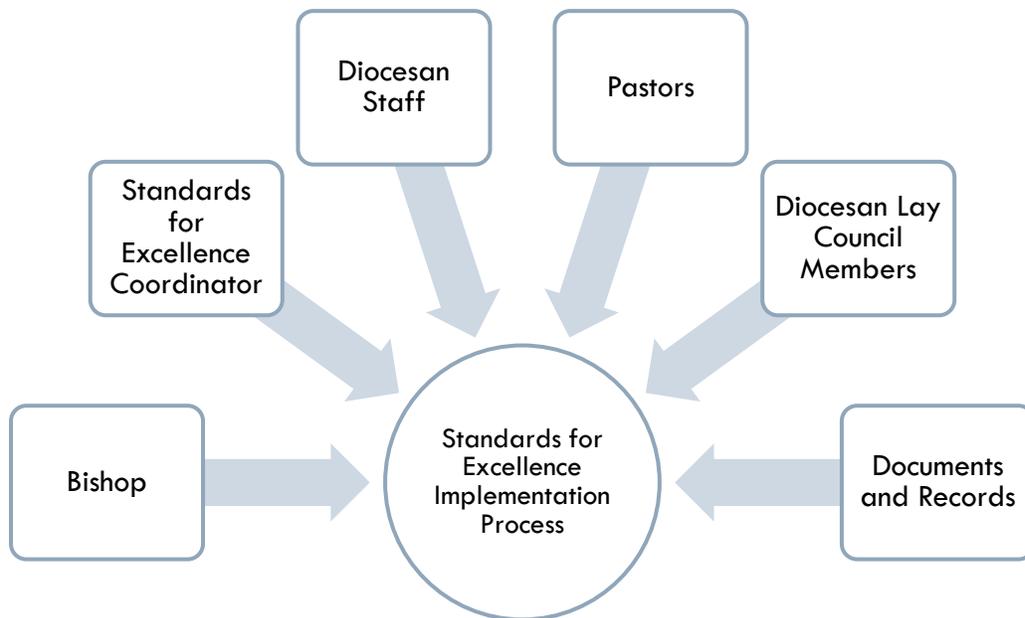
### Survey of Pastors

All pastors and associate pastors with parish leadership assignments were invited to complete either an online or mail survey regarding the Standards for Excellence implementation. Across both survey methods, 11 surveys (five pastors and six associate pastors) out of 62 were received, yielding an 18% response rate.

### Data Sources

As depicted in Figure 1, the case study utilized multiple procedures, mixed methods, and divergent data sources to contribute to an emerging understanding of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary. These data sources were triangulated in an attempt to gain convergence on the central phenomenon of interest.

FIGURE 1. DATA SOURCE CONVERGENCE ON STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION.



## **Document Review**

Archival records provided one information source for describing the unfolding of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary. These materials included: a) extant program materials describing the Leadership Roundtable's background and initiatives; b) notes provided by the Standards for Excellence Coordinator, including a basic timeline of project events; c) notes on the implementation process provided by the Leadership Roundtable; d) working notes from the appointed Committee of the Priests' Council; d) correspondence between the Bishop and parishes regarding training sessions; and e) presentation and support materials introduced at the training sessions.

## **Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interview protocols were designed to create a focused, targeted approach to collecting qualitative interview data from key stakeholders. Centered around five to seven basic questions, interview protocols were customized slightly to focus on the unique positionality, contribution, and role of the interviewee (see Appendix 3). In general, however, interviews sought information regarding one's role in the Standards for Excellence initiative, perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the process, and any recommendations for enhanced implementation or replication at other sites.

## **Survey of Pastors**

A researcher-created and stakeholder-informed survey was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from pastors regarding the Standards for Excellence initiative (see Appendix 4). In the survey development phase, an initial draft of survey items was reviewed by the Standards Coordinator and representatives from the Leadership Roundtable. Both contributed revisions, suggested wording or response set modifications, and added new survey items for inclusion. The final version of the survey, constructed using SurveyMonkey software, consisted of 16 items. The first section of the survey targeted implementation of the Standards for Excellence, attempting to discern perceived changes across the eight Principles (i.e., Human Resources, Financial and Legal, Fundraising, etc.) before versus after the Standards initiative. The second section posed five items about the orientation to the Standards and ongoing support provided by diocesan staff. The third and final section, consisting of five open-ended items, sought priests' qualitative input and commentary on the Standards.

## **Procedures**

### **Document Review**

Immediately upon securing both University and the Leadership Roundtable approval to begin the case study, pertinent and germane documents were requested from the Leadership Roundtable. Likewise, the Standards Coordinator provided a brief timeline and summary of the Standards initiative in the Diocese of Gary. During the first in-person interview with the Standards Coordinator, she provided a binder containing the Standards, local amendments, and a Leadership Roundtable-developed self-assessment checklist. In sum, the document list articulated earlier in the *Data Sources* section essentially created the contextual frame within which to pose questions, elicit feedback, and test insights about the Standards initiative.

### **Semi-structured Interviews**

As noted above, project data collection commenced in January 2010 via a 90-minute interview with the Standards Coordinator, held at the Diocese of Gary Pastoral Center in Merrillville, IN. As the first interview of the case study, an overarching goal was to discuss and consider the entire arc of project implementation—from initial contact with the Leadership Roundtable to current/ongoing efforts. To ensure a practitioner-informed and participatory approach, the Standards Coordinator was asked questions such as: a) What would you and the Diocese of Gary like to get out of this case study process? b) Who are the most important people in the Diocese of Gary to talk to about this project? and c) What kinds of questions do you think I should be asking in order to provide the Leadership Roundtable with an informative case study that will help them work better in other (arch)dioceses across the country?

In January and February, subsequent face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the Diocese of Gary Pastoral Center with the Bishop, the Manager of Human Resources, and the Director of Finance. During this same timeframe, two face-to-face interviews were conducted with pastors at their parish offices; one pastor was interviewed via telephone; and two members of the Diocesan Lay Pastoral Council were interviewed via telephone. All interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Detailed notes were taken during each interview, immediately transcribed, and annotated with relevant field notes when necessary. The formatted and transcribed notes were the basis for qualitative, thematic analysis.

### **Survey of Pastors**

The Bishop, the local Standards Coordinator, and the Leadership Roundtable representatives all agreed that an anonymous, confidential survey of parish priests would be a valuable strategy to assess the presbyterate's opinions regarding the Standards for Excellence initiative. Coordinating closely with the Diocesan Office, the survey was fielded via two channels.

First, the SurveyMonkey platform was used to deploy the survey electronically via the internet. On behalf of the case study researcher, the Executive Secretary to the Bishop e-mailed an invitation to 46 parish priests that use the diocesan e-mail listserve. The contents of the letter are included in Appendix 5. After two weeks, a reminder e-mail was sent, again by the Executive Secretary (see Appendix 5). One month after the survey was first activated, the case study researcher requested that a final reminder be sent alerting participants that the survey window would soon close. After consideration, the Diocese declined to send the final reminder.

Second, in February, a paper-and-pencil version of the survey—identical in all respects to the online version—was mailed to 16 parish priests that were not subscribed to the diocesan e-mail listserve. The mailing contained a cover letter, the survey, and a self-addressed, postage paid envelope for return mailing to the University. A second survey was mailed after three weeks, using the same procedures.

## FINDINGS

This section—case study findings—is divided into two parts. The first draws upon all data sources to recapitulate, in brief narrative form, the major elements of the initiative’s unfolding that have occurred over the past several years. Its aim is to trace the evolution of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary (see Table 1) to understand it as an instrumental case. In contrast, the second part of the section exhibits a more evaluative approach, geared toward assessing impact, discerning strengths and challenges, and foregrounding key stakeholders’ insights, hopes, and concerns for the initiative.

### A Project Narrative

From 2002 through 2005, Bishop Dale Melczek served as Chairman of the Committee on the Laity for the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. As part of that role, he served as a liaison with the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, and participated regularly in their annual meetings. Building on this relationship and his awareness of the Leadership Roundtable’s efforts to elevate ethics and accountability at the diocesan and parish levels, he was open to considering adoption of the Standards for Excellence code in the Diocese of Gary. In August 2007, the Leadership Roundtable’s Standards for Excellence Coordinator, Mr. Michael Brough, wrote Bishop Melczek to formally request a piloting of the Standards in the Diocese of Gary:

We are very keen to position these Standards for Excellence for maximum distribution and widespread implementation so that they might be of most utility and value for the Catholic Church in the U.S., and your experience as a pilot group will contribute significantly to this goal.

Soon thereafter, the bishop, diocesan staff, and the Leadership Roundtable representatives commenced initial planning and discussions for a local piloting of the Standards in the Diocese of Gary. Ms. Anne Verbeke, who serves as Director of Councils and Lay Ecclesial Ministry, was tapped to serve as the diocesan contact with the Leadership Roundtable and as the Standards for Excellence Coordinator.

That October, Bishop Melczek asked the Priests’ Council to consider implementing the document, “Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Parishes.” The Priests’ Council was supportive of this recommendation and undertook an initial review of the Standards. The Council divided into small groups and each of the groups focused on reviewing a few of the Standards. Each group had an appointed facilitator and the following questions were addressed: a) what ideas or points do you believe are important in this section of the document?; b) what ideas would you challenge the most?; c) after reading the entire document, should a similar document of standards be developed and implemented for the parishes? and; d) what challenges, if any, would we need to overcome in order to implement these standards? The groups immediately concluded that the Standards had merit, but there were some concerns. In particular, notes from the review session indicated that the Standards came across as “too corporate” and not very pastoral. Issues also surfaced about privacy, accountability, and applicability to parishes of different sizes.

Based on the issues raised by the group review, a committee was appointed, chaired by Father Michael Yadron, to study the document and make necessary adaptations to reflect the parishes in the diocese. The Committee was comprised of eight members, with one priest representing each of the Deaneries—Northlake, LaPorte, Southlake, Gary/Hobart, and Porter/Starke; the Manager of Human

Resources; the Director of Finance; and the Standards for Excellence Coordinator. The Committee met on six occasions from November 2007 through March 2008 to carefully consider whether—and to what extent—local customizations were needed in order to implement the Standards locally. Modifications were ultimately made to the original document to reflect the needs and expectations of a parish in a diocesan structure. The Committee proposed that the new document, “Principles for Responsible Parish Leadership,” be adopted by the Priests’ Council at their May 2007 meeting. While those present gave their approval of the document, they asked that additional groups review the document before its adoption. The Committee was charged to solicit the input of the Priest Deanery, the Deanery Pastoral Councils, and the Diocesan Lay Pastoral Council.

Feedback and consultation from the aforementioned groups was garnered from May through September 2007 and was incorporated into a final version of the document—essentially the original Standards with customized adaptations (see Appendix 6). In October 2008, the Priests’ Council voted 13-1 to approve the document; later that month it was officially promulgated by Bishop Melczek.

The “Principles for Responsible Parish Leadership” were shared with The National Leadership Roundtable in fall 2008. Noting that the Diocese of Gary’s revisions to the original Standards resulted in minor word changes and customization to fit diocesan circumstances and policies, The National Leadership Roundtable expressed concern about intellectual property rights. Specifically, the Standards for Excellence Institute holds the copyright for the Standards and The National Leadership Roundtable is licensed to produce the Catholic version. If the Diocese were to print copies of “Principles for Parish Leadership” and distribute them, it would constitute a breach of copyright. Given these circumstances, several alternatives were offered by The National Leadership Roundtable in order to find a workable solution that would support Standards implementation and dissemination while at the same time protecting the intellectual property rights of the developer of the Standards for Excellence code. The compromise was that a bundled set of materials would serve as the Standards documentation package: a) the original Standards document as provided by The National Leadership Roundtable; and b) the locally crafted and customized preamble and adaptations to the Standards (see Appendix 6).

The focus of the implementation process then immediately turned to training and dissemination of the Standards for Excellence. Over the course of three months—December 2008 through February 2009—five training sessions were held at parishes across the diocese with at least one session in each deanery. The Bishop invited each parish to a training session—specifically Pastors, Associate Pastors, Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council members, and Parish Staff. Sixty-seven out of 70 parishes participated. Each training session was of a similar format and length. Lasting about 90-120 minutes, the sessions were presented and moderated by the Standards Coordinator, the Manager of Human Resources, and the Director of Finance. Via PowerPoint presentation, discussion, and review of the printed materials (i.e., Standards and local adjustments), sessions delivered an introduction to the Standards, acclimation to their intent and purpose, and concrete examples of their application. Attendees submitted a signed document at the end of the training session that verified their receipt and acknowledgement of the Standards: “I acknowledge that I have received a copy of ‘Principles for Responsible Parish Leadership’ and that I will, to the best of my ability, put the above-mentioned ‘Principles’ into practice.” About one year later, an additional session was held at the Diocesan Offices, this time targeting Directors of Religious Education and Catholic school principals.

Since the promulgation of the Standards and the training sessions, the Diocese of Gary can now be said to be in an implementation phase—albeit at varying degrees at different parishes. Diocesan staff are continually available for questions and consultation regarding Standards implementation at individual parishes.

TABLE 1. TIMELINE OF KEY PROJECT MILESTONES.

Date	Milestone
August 2007	National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management requests that Diocese of Gary consider implementation of the newly developed “Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Catholic Sector”
October 2007	Bishop Dale Melczek asks Priests’ Council to consider implementing “Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Parishes”
November 2007	Decision at meeting of Priests’ Council to move forward on Standards implementation. Bishop appoints a committee, chaired by Father Michael Yadron, to study the document and make necessary adaptations
November 2007—April 2008	Subcommittee of priests and diocesan leaders, over the course of six meetings, reviews and adapts the Standards
May 2008	Revised draft presented for consideration at Priests’ Council meeting. Priests’ Council suggests that the Committee review the draft with the laity and priests in their deaneries
May 2008—September 2008	Committee meets with and consults Diocesan Pastoral Council, priests at deanery meetings, and the deanery Lay Councils. Comments and suggestions were incorporated.
October 2008	Priests’ Council voted 13-1 to approve the revised final draft and recommended that the Bishop accept the document
October 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2008	Bishop Melczek officially promulgated the document, “Standards of Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Parishes,” for implementation in all of the parishes in the Diocese of Gary
November 2008	Special training sessions of the final version of the Standards held at Sacred Heart Parish and Queen of All Saints Parish
December 2008	Special training sessions of the final version of the Standards held at Our Lady of Consolation Parish and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish
January 2009	Special training session of the final version of the Standards held at St. Bridget Parish
January-February 2009	Special training session on the final version of the Standards held for School Principals and Directors of Religious Education at the Diocesan Offices
January 2009—Current	Consultation and support provided for individual parish implementation of the Standards

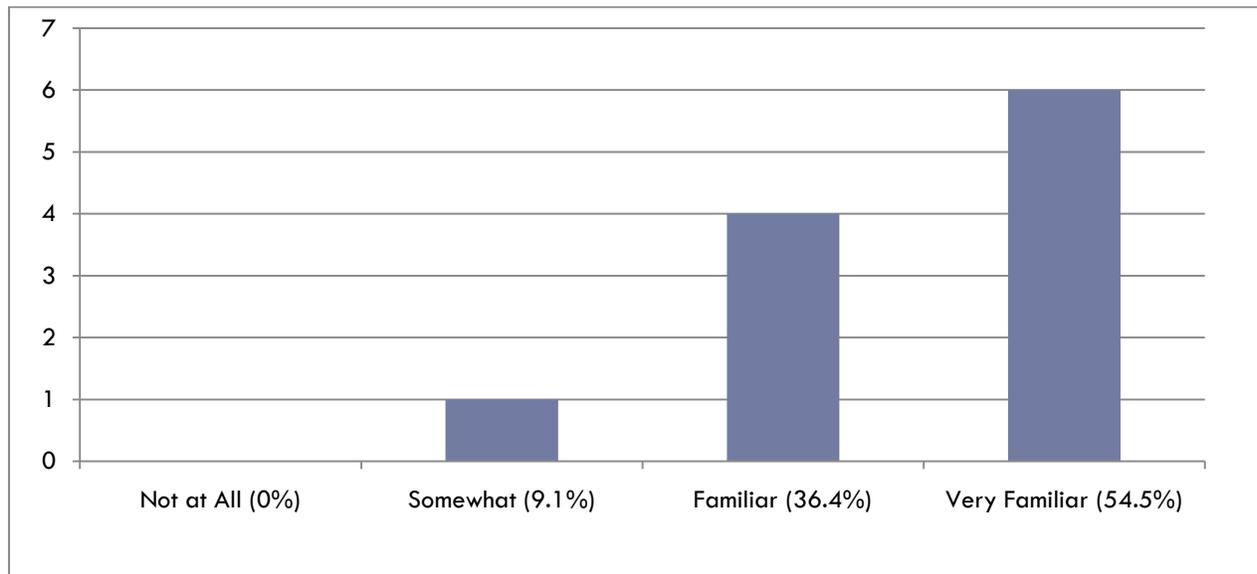
## Implementation Assessment

This second part of the Findings section likewise draws upon all data sources to discern a convergent view upon the overall implementation of the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary. Various impact indicators are presented here—both those that are derived from a priori questions posed by the survey and interview protocols, and those that emerged from the body of collected data. Thus, the major thematic areas addressed as part of the implementation assessment are: a) awareness and effort; b) perceptions of impact; c) need and value; and d) challenges.

### Awareness and Effort

Parish priests were asked to rate their familiarity with the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary. Rated on a scale from 1 to 4, the mean response value was 3.45 ( $SD = .69$ ), midway between *familiar* and *very familiar*. As depicted in Figure 2, over 90% of survey respondents indicated that they were *familiar* ( $n = 4$ ) or *very familiar* ( $n = 6$ ) with the initiative.

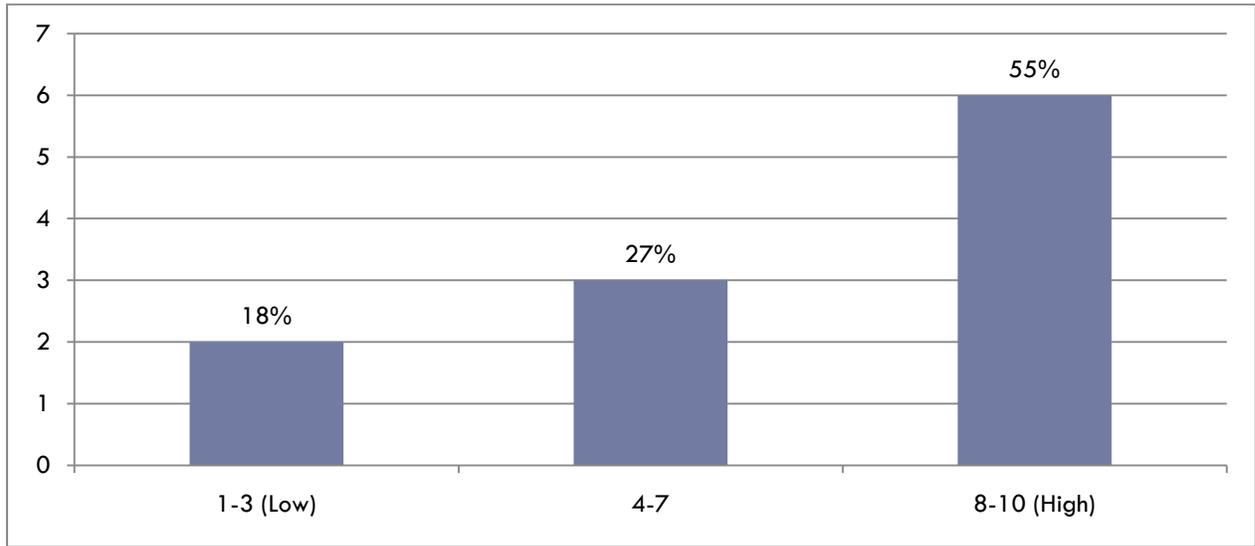
FIGURE 2. FAMILIARITY/AWARENESS OF THE STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE.



Item Statistics	Mean	SD	Min-Max
	3.45	0.69	2-4

To gauge the level of commitment and operational focus devoted to the Standards, parish priests were asked how much effort they and their parish community have exerted toward implementing the Standards for Excellence codes. Rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high), the mean response value was 6.64 ( $SD = 2.98$ ). Figure 3 represents participant responses collapsed into low, medium, and high effort categories. Fifty-five percent indicated a high level of effort toward Standards implementation, while 27% reported medium effort and 18% reported low effort.

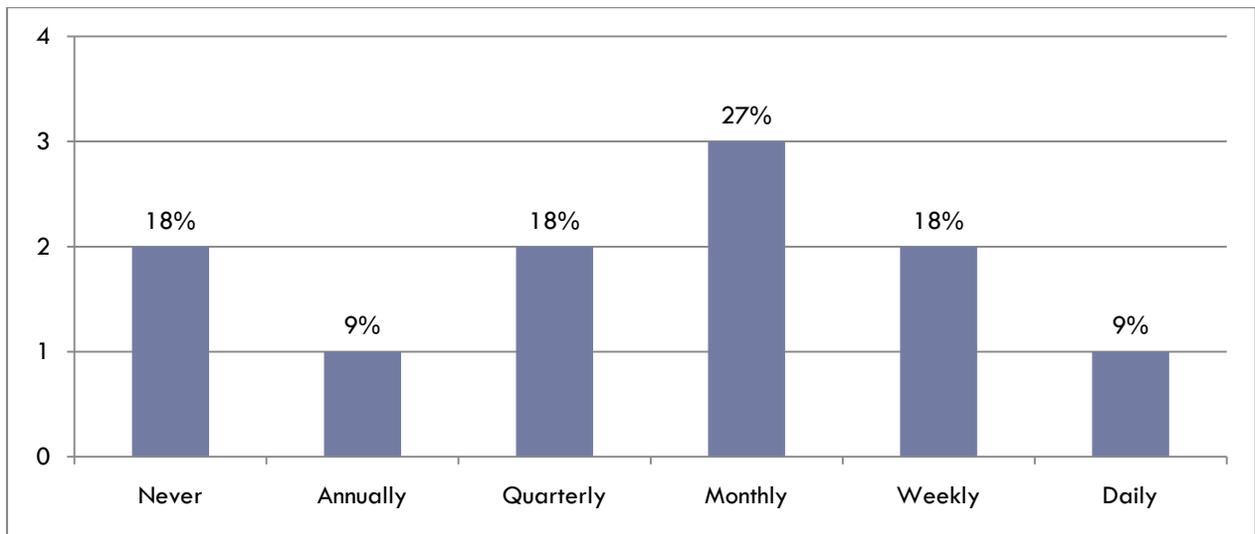
FIGURE 3. EFFORT EXERTED TOWARD STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION.



Item Statistics	Mean	SD	Min-Max
	6.64	2.98	1-10

To probe more deeply into whether the Standards have become engrained in parish operations, participants were asked how often the Standards for Excellence Codes are acted upon, referenced, etc. in their parish (see Figure 4). Response values spanned the scale from *never* (n = 2) to *daily* (n = 1). On average, parish priests indicated that the Standards were referenced or mentioned roughly between *quarterly* and *monthly* in parish operations (M = 3.45; SD = 1.63).

FIGURE 4. REGULARITY OF REFERENCE TO STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE.



Item Statistics	Mean	SD	Min-Max
	3.45	1.63	1-6

### Perceptions of Impact

Moving beyond simple awareness of the Standards, the survey data also shed light on priests' perceptions of the impact of the Standards. That is, survey respondents were asked to consider each of the eight major principles embedded in the Standards (e.g., Mission Statement and Ministry, Governance and Advisory Bodies, Conflict of Interest, etc.), and discern the extent to which each principle was addressed/implemented before vs. after the adoption of the Standards for Excellence.

Using the reference frame of pre- vs. post-Standards adoption, survey respondents rated each principle on a scale ranging from 1 (low) to 10 (high). Figure 5 presents the eight principle areas while highlighting the before/after comparison. The response pattern clearly indicates that for each and every principle, mean scores were higher after Standards adoption than before.

FIGURE 5. BEFORE VS. AFTER STANDARDS ADOPTION, COMPARISON ACROSS PRINCIPLES.

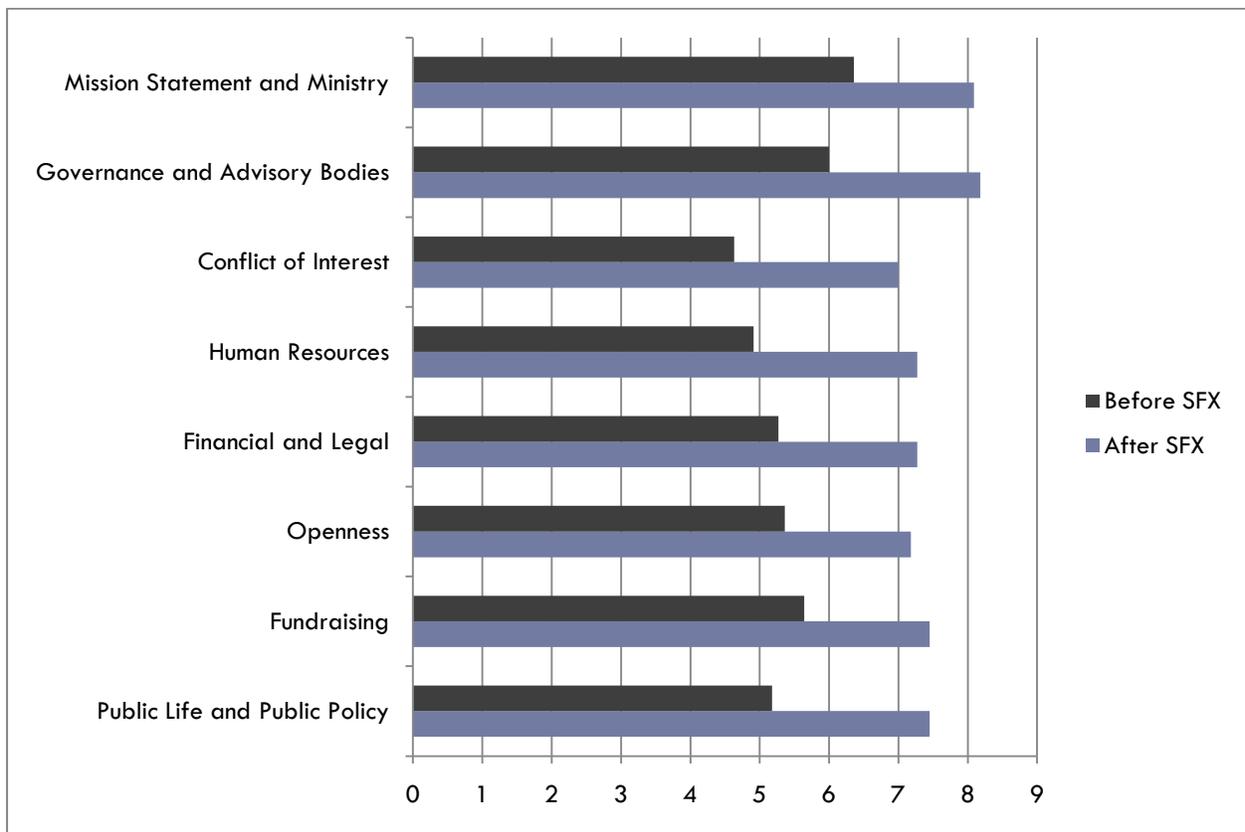


Table 2 allows for a closer inspection of the mean values before versus after Standards adoption. Note that the lowest mean value occurred for the Conflict of Interest Principle—both before ( $M = 4.63$ ;  $SD = 3.11$ ) and after ( $M = 7.00$ ;  $SD = 2.72$ ) Standards adoption. Across all Principles, however, there were mean score gains.

An inferential analysis of these data allows one to assess whether the increase in mean scores is statistically significant. That is, are the observed changes greater than what might be expected by chance variation? Paired sample t-tests were conducted on the before vs. after mean values and those t-values are also presented in Table 2. These analyses reveal that statistically significant pre-post changes were evident in pastors' perceptions of five out of the eight principles: Governance and Advisory Bodies,  $t(10) = 2.56, p < .05$ ; Conflict of Interest,  $t(10) = 3.04, p < .05$ ; Human Resources,  $t(10) = 2.50, p < .05$ ; Financial and Legal,  $t(10) = 2.41, p < .05$ ; Public Life and Public Policy,  $t(10) = 2.63, p < .05$ . For these areas, pastor data indicates that these principles have been more fully addressed/implemented since the adoption of the Standards for Excellence.

TABLE 2. BEFORE VS. AFTER STANDARDS ADOPTION—MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND T-VALUE.

Element	Before SFX		After SFX		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Mission Statement and Ministry Program	6.36	2.54	8.09	2.07	2.23
Governance and Advisory Bodies	6.00	2.90	8.18	2.27	2.56*
Conflict of Interest	4.63	3.11	7.00	2.72	3.04*
Human Resources	4.91	2.38	7.27	2.38	2.50*
Financial and Legal	5.27	3.20	7.27	3.50	2.41*
Openness	5.36	3.23	7.18	3.46	2.19
Fundraising	5.64	2.80	7.45	2.81	2.19
Public Life and Public Policy	5.18	2.79	7.45	2.73	2.63*
<b>Overall</b>	<b>5.38</b>		<b>7.53</b>		<b>13.81**</b>

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ .

Considering the Standards as a whole, the final row of Table 2 indicates that across all eight principles the mean value increased in the before versus after comparison ( $M = 5.38$  vs.  $M = 7.53$ ). An overall t-test confirms this statistically significant increase,  $t(7) = 13.81, p < .01$ . In sum, the findings indicate that there is a measurable, positive, statistically significant increase in the mean values, suggesting that parish priests are more attentive to these principles now compared to before the Standards for Excellence adoption.

### **Articulating Need, Expressing Value**

Based upon the interview data and the open-ended survey data, a constellation of themes emerged that spoke to the need for and the value inherent in the Standards for Excellence initiative. Four categories of data are unpacked here, which show that the Standards a) establish a needed common ground; b) contribute to improved practice; c) are built upon and are executed within a consultative and collaborative environment, and; d) exhibit great synergy with diocesan efforts focused on human resource development.

*Establishing a Needed Common Ground.* A prominent theme evident within stakeholder interviews and survey responses was the notion that the Standards for Excellence initiative provides a common ground of sorts—both needed and welcomed—for ethical and responsible parish practices within the Diocese. This sentiment was expressed directly by the bishop, who explained that there is a need to continually develop the human capital in the diocese, and an effective vehicle to do so is a common set of guidelines and expectations. Bishop Melczek explained that “the Standards of Excellence are a good tool to develop those in leadership positions in being more accountable and transparent in developing the mission, the finances, and the human resources of the parish.” The bishop was quick to add, however, that the Standards effort must not be seen as solely about guidelines and maintaining operational effectiveness; ultimately the Standards contribute to mission. When pastors and parishes view the Standards effort as inherently linked to mission, parishioners are then better able to engage in some aspect of the Church’s mission. As the bishop clarified, “when a significant segment of the parishes focus on the content of the Standards, you increase effectiveness of the parish and increase transparency, and that leads to personal engagement among the faithful.”

**“The Standards of Excellence are a good tool to develop those in leadership positions in being more accountable and transparent in developing the mission, the finances, and the human resources of the parish.”**

Other stakeholders emphasized the need for the common ground and the specific direction that the Standards provide. As one interviewee candidly noted, “priests are supportive of the Standards because they know of the shenanigans that go on.” One stakeholder noted that the spirit of the Standards document is to “try to raise awareness and the level of professional practice—it essentially raises the bar.” Another posited that “the Standards serve as a great starting point and reference point.” When issues arise in parishes, “the Standards have opened up doors so that at least you can have a conversation.”

Several pastors addressed the need for the type of training and awareness that the Standards demand. For example, one pastor explained that many parishes now are headed by a single priest and while “...we used to be able to learn on the job through apprenticeship to pastors—especially in areas like human resources and law, that’s not the case now. You sometimes move very quickly to becoming a pastor.” Another respondent concurred, noting that priests play a huge role in implementing the Standards, but “...we’re trained in Church, not business.” The Standards appear to serve as a needed anchor for ethical and responsible parish practices. Indeed, as one interviewee noted, “before the Standards, most people operated in a vacuum.”

Stakeholders also expressed the important role that the laity assumes in delineating the common ground of the Standards. The bishop himself sets this tone: "...the priests but even more so the laity has been entrusted with the Standards." Diocesan lay councils should see the Standards as an invitation to open a dialogue about these issues. Another interviewee said that "the standards—and the whole initiative—are complementary to the spirit of inclusion and outreach put forth by Vatican II about lay involvement in the Church." Stakeholders cited that the laity had interest in the Standards, especially as they speak to financial and legal arrangements. Moreover, interviewees conveyed that the Standards offer one way for the Church to be proactive rather than reactive. In fact, one respondent noted that "some of the parishes are in a defensive position because of economics, so the Standards are even more relevant and important." Lay involvement in the Standards initiative has been affirming and their contributions thus far leave them "with the sense that we can lift the Church to a higher standard."

*Improving Practice.* Another theme emerging from the interviews and surveys centered on the articulation of how parish operational practices have already changed and/or how the Standards hold the potential for such change. Most basically, this was captured by the sentiment, "the Standards help us to achieve consistency and to improve." Working through the Standards at the parish level, one pastor explained:

As we've been going through the Standards, it's brought to light that we were in the dark. The Standards have provided more clarity, structure, and understanding. As we applied the Standards over our various parish operations, assumptions that we might have had about management/operations were often proven wrong.

**"The Standards help us to achieve consistency and to improve."**

Other stakeholders offered several concrete examples and observations to illustrate progress toward organizational effectiveness that has been prompted by the Standards:

- One parish is reading each of the eight principles at each of the monthly committee meetings and discussing the implications. This has been a good evaluation of the parish's operating principles and has led to changing some of the practices.
- Parish employees feel good about knowing their position expectations and benefits. In addition, parishioners like knowing that policies are not arbitrary.
- One small parish has become more attentive to maintaining minutes of meetings and consistently holding meetings on a regular basis.
- At one parish, the Standards have prompted discussions—discussions that pursued a more sophisticated/refined understanding of human resource issues, job classifications, etc., than ever before.
- One pastor reported that performance reviews are easier than ever before, since job descriptions and responsibilities are fully fleshed out.
- "We're able to point to the Standards and the policy book to resolve disputes and provide clarifications. Things that looked arbitrary before are now viewable and in writing."

As these examples demonstrate, the Standards seem to provide a springboard for discussion, but also needed guidance. Stakeholders frequently recount how they can initiate such conversations more easily now with the preface, “The Standards for Excellence says that we should...” Both the collected testimony and the previous examples appear to back up the claim made by one pastor: “It’s going from a book [the Standards] that sits on the shelf to praxis.”

*Consultative and Collaborative Processes.* Stakeholders provided extensive commentary regarding the consultative and collaborative processes that have surrounded the Standards for Excellence project and its early implementation. Once again, episcopal leadership seems to create the overarching tenor for participatory, collegial efforts in the Standards for Excellence initiative. Interview and survey respondents cited both the extensive input that the presbyterate provided in shaping the Standards and the effort to include lay councils in the process. Both the Priests’ Council and the Lay Diocesan Council contributed their time and effort in order “to take ownership and to make subtle changes to the document [the Standards], a combination that proved invaluable to increasing buy-in.” One stakeholder wholeheartedly endorsed this viewpoint, commenting that “you’ve gotta have a bishop that believes in the laity for the Standards process to take hold. The process demands much collaboration between priests and the laity.”

One pastor thought that the work of the Priests’ Council Committee that vetted the Standards was critical. He said that “it’s something that the Presbyterate has to embrace—breaking the Standards into smaller chunks and splitting them among the Committee was a good idea. It increased overall buy-in and made the process more manageable and less daunting and overwhelming.” Another claimed that “it [the Standards] would be on a shelf if we didn’t go through the consultative process – it would not be used at all.” “The process works because it wasn’t handed down from on high,” one pastor concluded.

As for lay involvement, interviewees recalled that throughout the process there was an effort to make sure that the lay community had a voice. Indeed, respondents explained that the laity is able to bring about a degree of pressure to encourage strategic change and accountability. One stakeholder added that “the benefit of having the lay review was to make the Standards more street level.”

**“You must have a bishop that believes in the laity for the Standards process to take hold. The process demands collaboration between priests and the laity.”**

Several stakeholders noted that the collaborative approach to the initiative was evident even at the diocesan training sessions held between December 2008 and February 2009. One stakeholder articulated the underlying approach guiding those sessions:

It wasn’t meant to be seen as ‘training’ per se. It was more of an attitude that we’re giving you a set of tools here in case you’re not already doing it; we acknowledge that you may be living these issues but are not intimately aware of the pertinent laws. This was not a corrective. Rather the idea was to endorse a good set of ideals, raise the issue of consistency, and to set a common standard.

Another stakeholder concurred, recapping the sessions' message as "we have committed to implementing the Standards, and here are some materials to support that." As one respondent summarized, "it (the Standards process) was lengthy in the time it took, but it was worthwhile; we wanted to do it carefully." The data would support the conclusion that in addition to executing the work carefully over a period of months, the Standards effort was broadly consultative, collegial, and participatory.

*Synergy with Diocesan Human Resources Efforts.* Stakeholder interviews consistently noted that there was obvious synergy between the Standards initiative and the Diocese's own recent focus on human resource issues. Specifically, the first Diocesan Manager of Human Resources began employment in May 2007, nearly coinciding with the first movements in the Standards initiative (August 2007). Stakeholders noted that Human Resources is a major area that the Standards focus on, so these efforts have been mutually reinforcing. One interviewee pointed out that "the Standards initiative has been a great process for pushing forward the HR piece in the Diocese – especially calling for and enhancing job descriptions, performance evaluations, etc." For example, the Employee Manual was adapted to be in line with the Standards.

**"the Standards initiative has been a great process for pushing forward the HR piece in the Diocese – especially calling for and enhancing job descriptions, performance evaluations, etc."**

The diocesan training sessions on the Standards—because of the inherent overlap with human resources issues—also served as a primer and introduction to the duties/oversight of the new diocesan human resource office. Since the HR Manager position was so new, the sessions served as a forum to convey information about HR and its role in the Diocese.

A frequently cited resource mentioned by several stakeholders was a CD provided at the training session. Provided in the spirit that "we wanted to give them tools, not frustrate them," the CD contained both diocesan HR and finance policy documents that would be helpful to a parish in implementing the Standards. Appendix 7 includes an overview of the myriad contents of the CD, which contained sample conflict of interest forms, general position descriptions, specific policies, etc. These materials sent a two-fold message to clergy and other attendees: "these are to help you get to compliance," but "you don't need to be starting from scratch." Feedback from pastors was especially laudatory regarding the support/reference materials provided. One expressed that, "the CD was extremely helpful. I think it led to some 'a ha' moments for people." Another wrote that the resource was "useful to cross-check and enhance our policy documents."

### **Articulating Challenges**

Survey and interview data also coalesced around several challenges that have arisen throughout the Standards for Excellence implementation process. This section presents and describes three such challenges: a) accountability within the Standards for Excellence implementation; b) training and ongoing support, and; c) customization of Standards for Excellence.

*Accountability within the Standards for Excellence Implementation.* Several stakeholders, attempting to take an objective, all encompassing view of the Standards implementation, raised the issue of accountability. There was a sense among interviewees—reiterated by the survey item on effort (see Figure 3)—that Standards implementation is widely variable across parishes. Illustrative comments include: “some parishes have put the books on the shelf and others are working hard with it,” “many parishes do their own thing, so some are doing better than others,” and “it [the Standards] was accepted well by the presbyterate, but I can’t tell you that it’s applied equally well.”

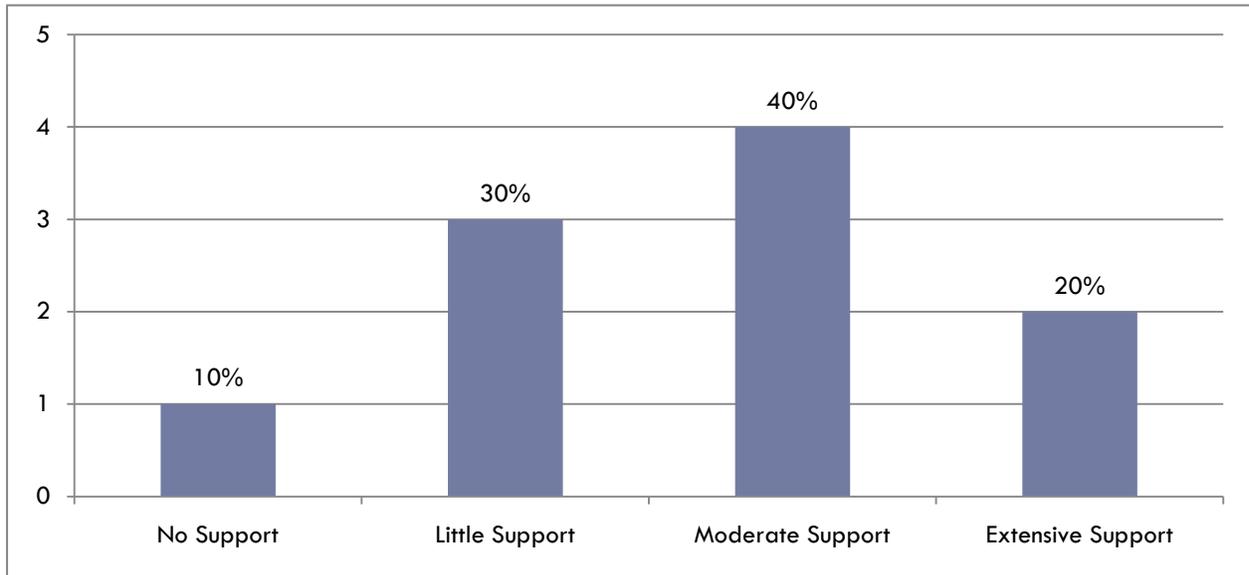
“it [the Standards] was accepted well by the presbyterate,  
but I can’t tell you that it’s applied equally well.”

From the very beginning of the initiative—the consideration and review of the Standards—the Diocesan Council felt that the Standards had merit, but they likewise expressed “concerns about who was going to enforce it.” Even at the training sessions, stakeholders reported that clergy were perhaps thinking, “What will I have to do to adjust to this [the Standards]? How accountable will I have to be?” In fact, at the training sessions, a few attendees asked candidly, “What if we don’t implement this?”

It appears that the operative assumption has been that execution and upholding of the Standards is a parish responsibility. There is a presumptive stance that the Standards are being upheld and that the diocese is available to assist as needed. Even with that assumption, perhaps even more so because of it, the question of accountability still remains. As one stakeholder pointedly remarked, “What is the vehicle to measure accountability? Currently, there is no tool to capture the change or progress of the initiative.” Nationally, the Standards for Excellence Institute does provide a voluntary certification program and a Seal of Approval for organizations that demonstrate compliance with all 55 Standards and some Catholic entities have already received that Seal.

*Training and Support for Standards for Excellence Implementation.* Bishop Melczek was clear that the Standards “must not become a dead document,” recognizing that parishes must view Standards implementation as an ongoing and dynamic process. As one pastor queried, the crux of the issue is this: “Does it [the Standards] sit on the shelf and get ignored or does it become the culture of the parish?” Speaking directly to these issues, survey data indicated a degree of polarization regarding the level of ongoing support for Standards implementation. Figure 6 shows that 40% of respondents perceive *little to no support*, while 60% report either *moderate* or *extensive support* from the diocese. Likewise, the mean value of 2.7 ( $SD = .95$ ) falls between *little support* and *moderate support*. On a national level, 22 free education resource packets are available to dioceses and parishes, which provide sample policies, templates, and resources to assist parishes with the implementation of each of the Standards (see Appendix 8 for a list of topics). An online forum provides for the exchange of experiences and best practices. These resources and further opportunities for consulting or training services can be found at [www.CatholicStandardsForExcellence.org](http://www.CatholicStandardsForExcellence.org).

FIGURE 6. LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE.



Item Statistics	Mean	SD	Min-Max
	2.7	.95	1-4

The open-ended survey data and the semi-structured interviews shed light on the differing viewpoints toward support for Standards implementation. Some pastors spoke directly to the immediate and effective direct support that they have received from diocesan staff, particularly finances and human resources. Likewise, diocesan staff readily described individual invitations to provide technical assistance, troubleshoot, or consult on a particular policy or practice. When requested, the Manager of Human Resources has given topical presentations on areas within the Standards that a given parish is working on. Diocesan staff also reported an elevated caliber and sophistication to the types of incoming calls/inquiries made by pastors and parish staff since the start of the initiative. Diocesan staff also reported serving as a hub for information sharing and best practices, sometimes connecting two pastors who might be working on the same parts of the Standards. Exchanges like these have contributed to “a nice, reciprocal, open-ended sharing” of strategies and insights.

In contrast, multiple stakeholders described the challenges of what they perceive as a lack of support to ensure that the Standards become the default operating guidelines. First, some pastors commented that this work simply demands staffing and time, two commodities in short supply at the parish level. One lamented that, “you almost need your own HR director.” Another wrote that, “with a small staff and limited budget and multiple responsibilities, a pastor has no time to formally use [the Standards].” An interviewee cautioned that the diocese must “recognize that it’s [the Standards] labor intense and it takes a lot of time. Some elements of the work are not able to be delegated, so the pastor must be involved.”

Second, some strong opinions were expressed about the need for ongoing support from the diocese in terms of follow-up, support, and staffing. One commented about the “lack of follow through. There is

no encouragement. We did it once, now it is forgotten. I have little sense from the Diocese perspective that this code is a priority in our Diocese.” One survey respondent reflected:

Until the email came asking for input, I truly had forgotten about there even being a standard of excellence. I have grown too accustomed to the Diocese of Gary’s ‘one and done’ attitude. You speak about it; do a task regarding it, then you move on to the next project. Once it is done, we tend to just let it grow dusty on the back shelf. There has been little encouragement to do any follow up to the initial training and implementation.

One stakeholder described that what is needed is a phased or tiered approach to the Standards implementation. Specifically, it was recommended that after the initial roll-out, there needs to be “lots of opportunities for consultation, facilitation, group training, and real examples.” The suggestion was to accomplish this work one section at a time and make slow, steadfast progress; otherwise, “it seems like you’re swallowing a whale here.” At least one respondent reasoned that if the initiative is to be taken seriously and is to be positioned for long-term adoption, then “actual money should be on the table to support it—consultants that work with you to customize policies, update procedures, etc.”

“...recognize that it’s [the Standards implementation] labor intense and it takes a lot of time. Some elements of the work are not able to be delegated, so the pastor must be involved.”

*Applying a Standard Model.* A final area of challenge arose from survey and interview comments directed at what some might term an outside-in or a top-down approach to the Standards for Excellence initiative. To be clear, this sentiment was not directed at the hierarchy within the Diocese, but rather at an outside organization (i.e., The National Leadership Roundtable) playing a prominent role in model implementation and dissemination. One pastor wrote that for this initiative to work, “the locals need to own it. The Leadership Roundtable needs to be less rigid. The Standards need to be customized.” Similarly, one survey respondent offered this advice: “involve as many people as possible in adapting these standards to the local situation. This will create ownership and buy-in.”

The reference to rigidity, mentioned by a few additional stakeholders, is tied directly to the copyright concerns that The National Leadership Roundtable expressed after the Diocese’s modification of the Standards (see the Project Narrative). In general, these stakeholders maintained that there was some consternation about the intellectual rights issue since ultimately the parishes have to consult two resources—the Standards and the Diocesan amendments to them. Others summarized this concern with more equanimity: “parishes found the copyright issue a little problematic, but not insurmountable” and “we can live with it—the changes were minor so it’s not the end of the world.”

One pastor wrote that for this initiative to work, “the locals need to own it.”

The other trend that surfaced regarding the application of a standard model came from a few stakeholders who essentially view the Standards as a baseline document that absolutely must be

customized to a given local context. They resist what they termed the “one-size-fits-all approach” that the Standards implies. Some respondents wrote that the diversity of parishes—in terms of size, socioeconomic resources, staff—is so great, that it would be unrealistic to apply a common standard to them. In that vein, one pastor said a reality check is needed: “let’s not put an expectation out there that is unrealistic.” From the national perspective of the Leadership Roundtable, having a common set of best practices for all Catholic parishes, dioceses, and nonprofits has its own clear benefits, with implementation appropriately customized at the local level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Knowledge Base on Implementation Research

As a technical support provider and consultant to other venues and contexts that might adopt the Standards, The National Leadership Roundtable might investigate the growing knowledge base on implementation research. Implementation is best understood as a process, not a discrete event. With that view in mind, a body of research, commentary, and field-based scholarship has emerged around how organizations can best implement and sustain evidence-based practices.

**A body of research, commentary, and field-based scholarship has emerged around how organizations can best implement and sustain evidence-based practices.**

As noted in the work of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN; Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005), effective and sustained outcomes occur when equal attention is directed toward implementation as is directed toward the model itself. According to NIRN, poor programs can be implemented well and effective programs can be implemented poorly. The obvious desired outcome is to have effective programs that are implemented effectively (A Conceptual View of Implementation, 2008). The NIRM also conceptualized stages of implementation (i.e., Exploration and Adoption, Program Installation, Initial implementation, Full Operation, Innovation, Sustainability), a framework which could be of use to The National Leadership Roundtable as it presses forward on this and similar projects (Stages of Implementation Defined, 2008).

### Booster Shot—A Synergist Needed

In pharmacology, a booster provides added synergy via a chemical compound or substance. Data sources roundly point to the need for a booster shot for the Standards for Excellence initiative. One survey respondent wrote, “As time passes, we tend to forget some of the details. Eventually we are in need of reform/re-learning.” “We have to remember that this is not an overnight thing. It takes time and renewed effort,” said one stakeholder. Another stakeholder felt that “a second-generation presentation on the Standards” is due. An additional sentiment included, “we have to keep them [the Standards] before the eyes of the people.” One pastor offered this insight for ensuring that the Standards become fully and deeply woven into the culture of the diocese: “Priests often style their mode of operation on the basis of their first experience as assistants or associates. Pastors who find themselves as mentors might do well to use the Standards as a guide in their mentoring.”

While the prevailing opinion is that diocesan leadership has conveyed that the Standards initiative is important, the timing may be opportune to inject new vitality into the project. In particular, the data indicate that conditions may be appropriate to place a renewed focus on a) re-presenting a compelling rationale for the Standards initiative; b) convening follow-up continuing education sessions, and c) creating a forum for the easy exchange of Standards-related challenges and best practices.

We must “...convince Father why this has to be done.”

Any effort to provide a booster on the Standards initiative should pay close attention to renewed, redirected framing—with an explicit theological focus—of why this work is important in the first place. One stakeholder claimed that “pastors and parish leaders will need to be more convinced of the rationale underlying these standards.” Another felt that “more upfront work has to be done—in Church lingo—that makes the case why it’s important to do it [the Standards]...why you need to do it.” A common strand in these comments posits the idea that the business model of the Standards is at times too divorced from the pastoral mission of pastors and the Church. Stressing the link between the two makes a more compelling argument “to convince Father why this has to be done.”

### Accountability Mechanism

A top-level action step for both The National Leadership Roundtable and Diocese of Gary leadership is to consider strategies to augment the accountability mechanisms associated with the Standards. As outlined earlier in this report, accountability issues emerged immediately as the project commenced and certainly continue today. Several data points speak to this area: “accountability toward the Standards is squishy—there is no formal audit or way to know if they have been implemented,” “it’s a dynamic process so we need some way to measure it,” and “it has to be enforced more strictly.”

While The National Leadership Roundtable has developed and provided a self-assessment checklist (see Appendix 9), its use and application does not seem to be regularized or monitored. It is also unclear whether it serves a diagnostic or status update function. One pastor insisted that “if you wish better compliance, it might help to require an ‘annual report’ to be completed and sent to the Diocese each year.” Similarly, those stakeholders that raised accountability as an issue also strategized possible solutions: including assessment/discussion of the Standards as part of each pastor’s annual meeting at the deanery level or building a Standards-based assessment into the internal HR/Finance audit that the diocese regularly conducts.

accountability toward the Standards is squishy—there is no formal audit  
or way to know if they have been implemented,

## CONCLUSION

The Diocese of Gary and The National Leadership Roundtable are pioneering some deeply powerful—but relatively untried and untested at the diocesan level—universal Standards for ethical and responsible practice. As pioneers, they are navigating unknown lands and encountering challenges on the journey. There are unquestionably doubters and detractors of this broad effort, and this case study heard some of those voices: “this only gives the impression of competence.” But there were many more adherents across this case study analysis, exemplified by comments like “Just do it. It takes time but it’s worth the effort” and “this effort gives clarity and positive opportunity for the ongoing work of the Church.”

When asked what one additional comment survey respondents wanted to make, one wrote simply, “Be faithful to your call from Jesus.” Interestingly, another respondent made an even more explicit link between the Catholic faith and the value and virtue that is inherent in the Standards. He noted that in addition to our faith formation, which in and of itself should guide us operationally, we now have the Standards, to provide a codified organizational expectation as well. The connection goes to the very heart of the Standards initiative—the Standards are a valuable tool, a guidepost in our lifelong and larger endeavor—the ultimate call to be faithful to Jesus.

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## APPENDIX 1

### **Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Catholic Parishes**

#### **Preamble**

The Catholic Church is committed to continuing the mission of Jesus Christ as priest, prophet and king. In parishes across the country, the Church is serving and meeting the spiritual and temporal needs of women, men and children and strengthening communities. In pursuit of this religious mission, parishes seek and use temporal goods “to order divine worship, to care for the decent support of the clergy and other ministers, and to exercise the works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially toward the needy.” (Code of Canon Law, canon 1254, §2)

Catholic parishes are supported by individuals, corporations and foundations through charitable contributions and volunteer efforts and by the general public through state and federal tax laws. The ability of parishes to raise the revenues necessary to support the ministry programs through which they carry out their mission depends in some degree upon public confidence and public support.

These Standards for Excellence have been produced to present an appropriate level of ethical and accountable practices for Catholic parishes. They respond to the call to good stewardship and accountability in the U.S. bishops’ pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. The Standards serve as a model for parishes to implement in their operations and governance.

Catholic parishes must comply with the Church’s own canon law as well as applicable local, state, and federal laws. These Standards for Excellence build upon that foundation and describe how parishes should act to be ethical and accountable in their program operations, governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising. They are based on fundamental values of honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, compassion, responsibility, and accountability. Eight (8) Guiding Principles are provided, along with fifty-five (55) standards - more detailed performance benchmarks that will enable parishes to strengthen their operations.

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The Standards for Excellence are intended to describe how the most well managed and responsibly governed parishes operate. They provide benchmarks related to temporal affairs to determine how well a parish is fulfilling its obligations to those who benefit from its ministry programs, to contributors, and to the public both inside and outside the Church. Catholic parishes are encouraged to pledge to commit to the Guiding Principles of the Standards for Excellence and to work toward implementing the practices and principles outlined.

The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management (Leadership Roundtable) is dedicated to helping parishes, dioceses and indeed all Catholic organizations, to implement these Standards for Excellence. Working in partnership with other national Catholic organizations and in collaboration with bishops and diocesan leadership, the Leadership Roundtable provides educational resources and training to assist parishes to comply with the performance indicators outlined in these Standards.

## **Standards for Excellence**

### **Guiding Principles**

#### **1. MISSION STATEMENT AND MINISTRY PROGRAM**

Parishes are established to continue the mission of the Catholic Church in particular geographic locations and carry out this mission through specific ministry program activities. Parishes should have well-defined mission statements, and their ministry programs should effectively and efficiently work toward achieving these mission statements. Parishes have an obligation to ensure ministry program effectiveness and to devote their resources to achieving its stated purpose.

#### **2. GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY BODIES**

The administration of parishes is entrusted to the pastor, appointed by the bishop, who is required by canon law to establish certain advisory councils. A parish finance council is required by canon law. Canon law allows the bishop to mandate the establishment of a parish pastoral council. These councils are governed by norms issued by the bishop. Canon law also places requirements on the financial administration of the parish by the pastor as well as systems of accountability. Effective parish advisory bodies should serve to further the mission of the organization, establish management policies and procedures, ensure that adequate human resources (volunteer and/or paid staff) and financial resources (earned income, grants, and charitable contributions) are available, and actively monitor the organization's financial and programmatic performance.

#### **3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Both clergy and laity who serve on parish staff, either in paid positions or as volunteers, should act in the best interest of the parish rather than in furtherance of personal interests or the interests of third

parties. Parishes should have policies in place, and routinely and systematically implement those policies, to prevent actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES**

A parish's relationship to its ministerial personnel, both clergy and lay, paid and volunteer, is fundamental to its ability to achieve its mission. The roles and responsibilities for bishops and priests are contained within canon law. Volunteers occupy a special place in parishes serving in governance, administrative and programmatic capacities. Parish human resource policies should address both clergy and laity, paid staff and volunteers, and should be fair, establish clear expectations, and provide for meaningful and effective performance evaluation.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL**

Parishes must practice sound financial management and comply with a diverse array of legal and regulatory requirements, including those of canon law. Financial systems should assure that accurate financial records are kept and that the organization's financial resources are used in furtherance of its religious mission. Parishes should conduct periodic reviews to address regulatory and liability concerns.

#### **6. OPENNESS**

Although parishes are private entities, they operate in the name of the Church in service to members and the community at large with support from the faithful and the general public. As such, all parishes should provide the faithful and the public with information about their mission, ministry program activities and finances. They should also be accessible and responsive to members of the faithful and members of the general public who express interest in their affairs.

#### **7. FUNDRAISING**

Parishes depend on charitable fundraising for the support of their work. All fundraising activities should be conducted on a foundation of truthfulness and responsible stewardship. Parish fundraising policies should be consistent with their mission, compatible with their organizational capacity, respectful of the interests and intentions of donors and prospective donors, and in compliance with applicable canon law.

#### **8. PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY**

"Faithful citizenship calls Catholics to see civic and political responsibilities through the eyes of faith and to bring our moral convictions to public life" (Faithful Citizenship, US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2003). Parishes provide an important vehicle through which individuals organize and work together to improve their communities. Therefore they should represent Catholic Social Teaching

and the interests of the people they serve through public education and public policy advocacy, as well as by encouraging clergy, staff, volunteers and the faithful to participate in the public affairs of the community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT AND MINISTRY PROGRAM**

Parishes are established to continue the mission of the Catholic Church in particular geographic locations and carry out this mission through specific ministry program activities. Parishes should have well-defined mission statements, and their ministry programs should effectively and efficiently work toward achieving these mission statements. Parishes have an obligation to ensure ministry program effectiveness and to devote their resources to achieving its stated purpose.

### **Mission**

(1) The parish's purpose, as defined and approved by the pastor in light of the diocesan mission statement, with appropriate input from his advisory councils, should be formally and specifically stated. The parish's activities should be consistent with its stated purpose.

### **Parish Evaluation**

(2) A parish should periodically revisit its mission statement and ministry programs (e.g., every 3 to 5 years) to determine the relevance and need for its ministry programs. The parish should evaluate whether the mission statement needs to be modified to reflect ecclesial or societal changes, its current ministry programs should be revised or discontinued, or new ministry programs need to be developed.

### **Ministry Program Evaluation**

(3) A parish should have defined, cost-effective procedures for evaluating, both qualitatively and quantitatively, its ministry programs and projects in relation to its mission. Where appropriate, these procedures should address programmatic efficiency and effectiveness, the relationship of these impacts to the cost of achieving them, and the outcomes for program participants. Evaluations should include input from program participants/recipients.

(4) Evaluations should be candid, be used to strengthen the effectiveness of the parish and, when necessary, be used to make programmatic changes.

### **Ministry Program Service**

(5) In providing its ministry programs or services, a parish should act with the utmost professionalism and treat persons served with respect. Where appropriate, a parish should have policies in place that protect the confidentiality of personal information and should provide a grievance procedure to address complaints. Parishes should regularly monitor the satisfaction of ministry program participants/recipients.

## **GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY BODIES**

The administration of parishes is entrusted to the pastor, appointed by the bishop, who is required by canon law to establish certain advisory councils. A parish finance council is required by canon law. Canon law allows the bishop to mandate the establishment of a parish pastoral council. These councils

are governed by norms issued by the bishop. Canon law also places requirements on the financial administration of the parish by the pastor as well as systems of accountability. Effective parish advisory bodies should serve to further the mission of the organization, establish management policies and procedures, ensure that adequate human resources (volunteer and/or paid staff) and financial resources (earned income, grants, and charitable contributions) are available, and actively monitor the organization's financial and programmatic performance.

### **Advisory Bodies' Responsibilities**

(6) "The pastor is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law" (canon 519) and the pastor "is to take care that the goods of the parish are administered according to the norm of canons 1281-1288" (canon 532). The parish pastoral council and finance council should engage in long-term and short-term planning activities as necessary to further the mission of the parish, to define specific goals and objectives related to the mission, and to evaluate the success of the parish's ministry programs toward achieving the mission.

(7) Recognizing that dioceses have different corporate structures for parishes based on the civil law of various jurisdictions, the parish pastoral council and finance council should establish policies for the effective management of the parish, including financial and, where applicable, personnel policies.

(8) The parish finance council should assist in preparing and approve the parish's budget annually and periodically assess the parish's financial performance in relation to the budget. As part of the annual budget process, the finance council should review the percentages of the parish's resources spent on ministry programs, administration, and fundraising.

(9) The finance council and pastoral council should periodically review the appropriateness of the overall compensation structure of the parish in conformity with diocesan policies and Catholic Social Teaching regarding workers' rights to a just wage.

### **Advisory Bodies' Composition**

(10) In compliance with canonical requirements, the parish pastoral and finance councils should be composed of individuals who are personally committed to the mission of the Church and possess the specific skills needed to accomplish the mission.

(11) Where an employee of the parish is a voting member of a parish advisory council, the circumstances must insure that the employee will not be in a position to exercise undue influence.

(12) Parish pastoral and finance councils should have no fewer than five unrelated members. Seven or more members are preferable.

(13) Diocesan norms establish the terms of the members of the parish finance council. Canonical statutes, the equivalent of bylaws, should set forth term limits for the service of parish pastoral council members.

(14) Parish pastoral council membership should reflect the diversity of the communities served by the parish.

(15) Members of the parish pastoral and finance councils should serve without compensation for their service as council members. Members may only be reimbursed for expenses directly related to carrying out their council service.

#### **Advisory Bodies' Conduct**

(16) The parish pastoral council and finance council are each responsible for its own operations, including the orientation, education, training and development of members, periodic (i.e., at least every two years) evaluation of its own performance, and where appropriate, the selection of new members.

(17) The parish pastoral council and finance council should establish stated expectations for members, (including any expectations for participation in fundraising activities, committee service, or ministry program activities).

(18) The parish pastoral council and finance council should meet as frequently as is needed to fully and adequately conduct the business of the parish. At a minimum, each council should meet four (4) times a year.

(19) The parish should have written policies that address attendance and participation of council members at meetings. These policies should include a process to address noncompliance with these policies.

(20) Written meeting minutes reflecting the actions of the council, including reports of council committees when acting in the place of the full council, should be maintained and distributed to council and committee members and be made available to parish members.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Both clergy and laity who serve on parish staff, either in paid positions or as volunteers, should act in the best interest of the parish rather than in furtherance of personal interests or the interests of third parties. Parishes should have policies in place, and routinely and systematically implement those policies, to prevent actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

#### **Conflict of Interest Policy**

(21) Parishes should have a written conflict of interest policy. The policy should be applicable to all clergy and laity, all members of advisory councils, paid staff and volunteers who have significant independent decision making authority regarding the resources of the parish. The policy should identify the types of conduct or transactions that raise conflict of interest concerns, set forth procedures for disclosure of actual or potential conflicts, and provide for review of individual transactions by the uninvolved members of one of the parish advisory councils.

#### **Conflict of Interest Statements**

(22) Parishes should provide all clergy and laity, paid staff and volunteers who have significant independent decision making authority regarding the resources of the parish with a conflict of interest statement that summarizes the key elements of the parish's conflict of interest policy. The conflict of interest statement should provide space for these persons to disclose any known interest that the individual, or a member of the individual's immediate family, has in any business entity which transacts

business with the parish, diocese or other Church organization. The statement should be provided to and signed by all council members, clergy, staff, and volunteers, both at the time of the individual's initial affiliation with the organization and at least annually thereafter.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

A parish's relationship to its ministerial personnel, both clergy and lay, both paid and volunteer, is fundamental to its ability to achieve its mission. The roles and responsibilities for bishops and priests are contained within canon law. Volunteers occupy a special place in parishes serving in governance, administrative and programmatic capacities. Parish human resource policies should address both clergy and laity, paid staff and volunteers, and should be fair, establish clear expectations, and provide for meaningful and effective performance evaluation.

### **Personnel Policies**

(23) A parish should have written personnel policies and procedures, based on policies established by the diocese and after consultation with the parish pastoral council, governing the work and actions of all clergy, employees and volunteers of the parish. In addition to covering the basic elements of the employment relationship (e.g. working conditions, employee compensation and benefits, vacation and sick leave), the policies should address employee evaluation, supervision, hiring and firing, nondiscrimination, succession planning, grievance procedures, harassment, employee growth and development, confidentiality of employee (lay and clergy), parishioner and organization records and information. The policies should be reviewed for civil and canon law implications for priests as distinct from lay employees.

(24) With respect to volunteers, the parish's policies and procedures should also address initial assessment or screening, assignment to and training for appropriate work responsibilities, ongoing supervision and evaluation, personal development, and opportunities for advancement.

(25) Personnel policies for all clergy, paid employees and volunteers must specify how the Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth is being implemented.

### **Employee Performance Evaluation**

(26) A parish should have written job descriptions for each employee that clearly identify roles and responsibilities.

(27) Parishes should have a system in place for regular written evaluation of employees by their respective supervisors, which should take place at least annually.

### **Employee Orientation**

(28) New employees of the parish should receive an orientation, which includes review of the parish's personnel policies and procedures, their position description, and an introduction to the Standards for Excellence. Employees should be provided with a copy of the personnel policies and these Standards, and should acknowledge their receipt in writing.

## **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL**

Parishes must practice sound financial management and comply with a diverse array of legal and regulatory requirements, including those of canon law. Financial systems should assure that accurate financial records are kept and that the organization's financial resources are used in furtherance of their religious mission. Parishes should conduct periodic reviews to address regulatory and liability concerns.

### **Financial Accountability**

(29) A parish should operate in accordance with an annual budget that has been prepared and approved by the pastor and parish finance council. "In each parish there is to be a finance council which is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to the prescript of canon 532." (Canon 537)

(30) A parish should create and maintain financial reports on a timely basis that accurately reflect the financial activity of the organization. Internal financial statements should be prepared no less frequently than quarterly, should be provided to the pastor, parish finance council, and should identify and explain any material variation between actual and budgeted revenues and expenses.

(31) To ensure the accuracy of the financial reports, all parishes with annual revenue in excess of \$300,000, should be audited by an independent Certified Public Accountant or diocesan auditors every year. The parish finance council should receive the audit report and management letter and oversee the implementation of any corrective action mentioned. The audited accounts should also be submitted to the diocesan finance officer annually. Parishes with annual revenue less than \$300,000 should be audited at least every three years.

(32) A parish should provide employees, both clergy and lay, and all the faithful, a confidential means to report suspected financial impropriety or misuse of Church resources and should have in place a policy prohibiting retaliation against persons reporting improprieties.

(33) Parishes should have written financial policies adequate for the size and complexity of their parish and in conformity with diocesan policies governing: (a) investment of the assets of the organization (b) internal control procedures, (c) purchasing practices, (d) unrestricted current net assets, and (e) disposition of assets in case of dissolution.

### **Legal Compliance and Accountability**

(34) Parishes must be aware of and comply with canon law as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws. This may include, but is not limited to, the following activities: complying with laws and regulations related to fundraising, licensing, financial accountability, document retention and destruction, human resources, lobbying and political advocacy, and taxation.

(35) Parishes and other Church organizations should periodically assess their level of insurance coverage in light of the nature and extent of the organization's activities and its financial capacity. A decision to forego general liability insurance coverage or Directors and Officers liability insurance coverage shall only be made by the pastor, after consultation with the parish finance council and diocesan finance officer and with the written approval of the diocesan bishop and shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting at which the decision was made.

(36) Parishes should periodically conduct an internal review of the organization's compliance with existing legal, regulatory and financial reporting requirements and should provide a summary of the results of the review to the pastor and the parish finance and pastoral councils.

## **OPENNESS**

Although parishes are private entities, they operate in the name of the Church in service to members and the community at large with support from the faithful and the general public. As such, all parishes should provide the faithful and the public with information about their mission, ministry program activities and finances. They should also be accessible and responsive to members of the faithful and members of the general public who express interest in their affairs.

### **Annual Report**

(37) Parishes (and all Catholic organizations) should prepare, and make available annually to the faithful and the public, information about the organization's mission, ministry program activities, and basic financial data. The report should also identify the names of the parish corporate board (where one exists), finance council members, pastoral council members, and management staff.

### **Public Access**

(38) Parishes should provide members of the public who express an interest in their affairs with a meaningful opportunity to communicate with an appropriate representative of the parish.

(39) Parishes should have at least one staff member who is responsible to assure that the parish is complying with both the letter and the spirit of federal and state laws that require disclosure of information to members of the public.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Parishes depend on charitable fundraising for the support of their work. All fundraising activities should be conducted on a foundation of truthfulness and responsible stewardship. Parish fundraising policies should be consistent with their mission, compatible with their organizational capacity, respectful of the interests and intentions of donors and prospective donors, and in compliance with applicable canon and civil law.

### **Fundraising Activities**

(40) A parish's fundraising costs should be reasonable over time. On average, over a five (5) year period, a parish should realize revenue from fundraising and other development activities that are at least three times the amount spent on conducting them. Church organizations whose fundraising ratio is less than 3:1 should demonstrate that they are making steady progress toward achieving this goal, or should be able to justify why a 3:1 ratio is not appropriate for the individual organization.

(41) Solicitation and promotional materials should be accurate and truthful and should correctly identify the Church organization, its mission, and the intended use of the solicited funds.

(42) All statements made by the parish in its fundraising appeals about the use of a contribution should be honored.

(43) Parishes must honor the known intentions of a donor regarding the use of donated funds.

#### **Donor Relationships and Privacy**

(44) Parishes should respect the privacy of donors and safeguard the confidentiality of information that a donor reasonably would expect to be private.

(45) Parishes should provide donors an opportunity to state that they prefer to remain anonymous and that their name, the amount of their gift, or other information not be publicly released.

(46) Parishes should provide donors an opportunity to have their names removed from any mailing lists which are sold, rented, or exchanged.

(47) Parishes should honor requests by a donor to curtail repeated mailings or telephone solicitations from in-house lists.

(48) Solicitations should be free from undue influence or excessive pressure, and should be respectful of the needs and interests of the donor or potential donor.

#### **Acceptance of Gifts**

(49) Parishes should have policies in place to govern the acceptance and disposition of charitable gifts that are received in the course of its regular fundraising activities. These policies should include procedures to determine any limits on individuals or entities from which the parish will accept a gift, the purposes for which donations will be accepted, the type of property which will be accepted, and whether to accept an unusual or unanticipated gift in light of the parish's mission and organizational capacity. Canonical norms on gift acceptance or rejection should be observed. Appropriate tax-related documentation should be provided for donors.

#### **Fundraisers**

(50) Fundraising personnel, including both employees and independent consultants, should not be compensated based on a percentage of the amount raised or other commission formula.

(51) When using the services of a paid professional fundraising consultant, dioceses, parishes and other Catholic organizations should only use the services of professional solicitors and fundraising counsel who are properly registered with applicable regulatory authorities.

(52) Parishes should exercise control over any staff, clergy, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, or businesses who are known to be soliciting contributions on behalf of the parish.

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY**

“Faithful citizenship calls Catholics to see civic and political responsibilities through the eyes of faith and to bring our moral convictions to public life” (Faithful Citizenship, US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2003). Parishes provide an important vehicle through which individuals organize and work together to improve their communities. Therefore they should represent Catholic Social Teaching and the interests of the people they serve through public education and public policy advocacy, as well as by encouraging clergy, staff, volunteers and the faithful to participate in the public life of the community.

### **Public Policy Advocacy**

(53) “In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation. All believers are called to faithful citizenship, to become informed, active, and responsible participants in the political process.” (Faithful Citizenship, USCCB) Parishes should have a written policy on advocacy defining the process by which the parish determines public positions on specific issues. The parish policy should always be consistent with diocesan policies and expectations.

### **Public Education**

(54) Parishes should assure that any educational information provided to the media or distributed to the faithful or the public is consistent with Catholic Teaching, factually accurate, nonpartisan and provides sufficient contextual information to be understood.

### **Promoting Public Participation**

(55) Parishes engaged in promoting public participation in community affairs shall be diligent in assuring that the activities of the organization are strictly nonpartisan, in conformity with Catholic teaching, and consonant with diocesan and USCCB guidelines on political activity.

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### **Acknowledgments:**

The Standards for Excellence program was first developed by the Maryland Association of Nonprofits Organizations. In developing the Standards, Maryland Nonprofits reviewed dozens of ethics codes and standards documents developed by other organizations, conducted sector and public surveys and established a volunteer Working Group to develop the Standards for Excellence code. The Leadership Roundtable developed this adaptation of the Standards code in conformity with canon law and USCCB guidelines.

The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management promotes excellence and best practices in the management, finances and human resource development of the Catholic Church in the U.S. by greater incorporation of the expertise of the laity.

The Leadership Roundtable is dedicated to helping individual Catholic dioceses, parishes and nonprofits to implement these Standards for Excellence. The Leadership Roundtable, working in partnership with other national Catholic organizations and in collaboration with bishops and diocesan leadership, provides educational resources and training to assist dioceses, parishes and nonprofits to comply with the performance indicators outlined in these Standards.

For further information on these Standards for Excellence and on best practices in Church management, finances and human resources, please visit our website at [www.TheLeadershipRoundtable.org](http://www.TheLeadershipRoundtable.org) or email [standards@nlrcm.org](mailto:standards@nlrcm.org) or call 202-223-8962 or write to The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, 1350 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 825, Washington, DC 20036.

## APPENDIX 2

### **Diocese of Gary – Statistical Overview**

Pope Pius XII established the Diocese of Gary on December 17, 1956. Prior to that time, the four counties of the diocese – Lake, LaPorte, Porter, and Starke – were in the Diocese of Fort Wayne (Bishop’s Office, Brief History of the Diocese, 2010).

The Diocese covers 1,807 square miles, comprised of 72 parishes. There are 22 elementary and 3 high schools, and 6 Catholic hospitals. The total Catholic population is 187,500 out of a total population of 788,055 (The Official Catholic Directory, 2009).

For additional background, consult <http://www.dcgary.org/>

## APPENDIX 3

### Semi-Structured Interview Guides

#### Diocesan Standards Coordinator

1. Can you describe the general timeline of the project in your diocese? When was it rolled out?
2. What would you and the Diocese of Gary like to get out of this case study process?
3. Who are the most important people in the Diocese of Gary to talk to about this project? Will they be eager and willing to do so?
4. Do you have documentation on hand about the project's progression (e.g., agendas, meeting minutes, a project log, timeline, etc)?
5. What kinds of questions do you think I should be asking in order to provide The National Leadership Roundtable with an informative case study that will help them work better in other (arch)dioceses across the country?

#### Bishop

1. Can you describe the general timeline of the project in your diocese? When was it rolled out?
2. What would you and the Diocese of Gary like to get out of this case study process?
3. Who are the most important people in the Diocese of Gary to talk to about this project?
4. What kinds of questions do you think I should be asking in order to provide The National Leadership Roundtable with an informative case study that will help them work better in other (arch)dioceses across the country?

#### Diocesan Staff

1. Describe your role in regard to the Standards implementation.
2. Discuss any thoughts/insights you have about the process.
3. Do you have any insights or recommendations that would be useful for the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management (the driver of the Standards movement) as they attempt to bring the Standards to other dioceses?

#### Diocesan Lay Council Members

1. When/how did you first encounter the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese of Gary?
2. What role did the Lay Diocesan Council play relative to the Standards?
3. What is your sense of how the Lay Council perceives the Standards and their adoption/implementation?
4. From your perspective, what are the benefits/upsides of parishes' adopting the Standards for Excellence? Are there any downsides? What are the challenges to adoption/implementation at the parish level?
5. What has been the big-picture impact of the Standards for Excellence in the Diocese and/or in your parish?
6. Is there anything that the Diocese can or should be doing to further promote/support the Standards for Excellence?

7. Do you have any insights or recommendations that would be useful for the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management (the driver of the Standards movement) as they attempt to bring the Standards to other dioceses?

Pastors

1. When/how did you first become involved with or hear about the Standards for Excellence initiative in the Diocese?
2. Did you attend a diocesan training session regarding the Standards? If so, please comment.
3. How have you and your parish worked with the Standards?
4. Have any practices/policies in particular been modified as a result of the Standards? Provide an example.
5. What additional supports and/or resources do you need in order to fully implement the Standards for Excellence Code?
6. What advice would you have for other dioceses were they to adopt the Standards for Excellence?
7. Can you think of anything that the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management—developer of the Standards—needs to know about the implementation process in Gary?

## APPENDIX 4

### Survey of Pastors

#### Implementation of the Standards for Excellence

1. Please rate your familiarity with the Standards for Excellence initiative in Diocese of Gary. (Not at all familiar; somewhat familiar; familiar; very familiar)
2. On a scale from 1-10, please rate the extent to which each content area of the standards was addressed/implemented **before** the adoption of the Standards for Excellence code.
3. On a scale from 1-10, please rate the extent to which each content area of the standards was addressed/implemented **after** the adoption of the Standards for Excellence code.
4. On a scale of 1-10, how much effort would you say you and your parish community have put into implementing the Standards for Excellence codes?
5. How often would you say the Standards for Excellence Codes are acted upon, referenced, etc. in your parish? (Never, Annually, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly, Daily)

#### Orientation and Support Provided by Diocesan Staff

6. Did you attend the diocesan training session hosted by diocesan staff? (yes, no)
7. How helpful was the training session? (not at all helpful; somewhat helpful; helpful; extremely helpful)
8. How could have the session been improved?
9. What level of support did/do you receive from the diocesan coordinator and other diocesan staff in implementing the Standards of Excellence Code? (no support, little support, moderate support, extensive support)
10. What additional supports and/or resources do you need in order to fully implement the Standards for Excellence Code?

#### Open-Ended Commentary

11. In your own words, what do you see as the major strengths of implementing and upholding the Standards for Excellence Code in parishes in the Diocese of Gary?
12. In your own words, what do you see as the major challenges of implementing and upholding the Standards for Excellence Code in parishes in the Diocese of Gary?
13. Can you provide one or more examples to illustrate how the Standards for Excellence Code has improved or created greater confidence in the various works of the Diocese?
14. What advice or suggestions would you give to others who are trying to implement the Standards for Excellence Code in their parish or diocese?
15. Any other comments/questions/concerns about the Standards for Excellence initiative?
16. Finally, so that we may better categorize your responses, please indicate whether you are a pastor or an associate pastor. (pastor, associate pastor)

## APPENDIX 5

### Survey Invitations and Correspondence

#### Invitation Letter

Dear Monsignor/Father,

Attached you will find a letter from James M. Frabutt, Ph.D., a faculty member at the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Frabutt is conducting a study of the Standards for Excellence for the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management. Because we implemented the Standards, the Diocese of Gary was asked to participate in the study.

The attached letter is coming from this office because we did not want to give out the e-mails of our priests to Dr. Frabutt.

The survey that is referred to in the letter does not come back to the diocese. It will go directly to Professor Frabutt.

Have a blessed day.

Valerie McManus

#### Attached Letter

Dear Father,

The University of Notre Dame and the Alliance for Catholic Education need your help in better understanding the Standards for Excellence implementation in the Diocese of Gary. The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management--in partnership with Notre Dame researchers--wants to learn more about what pastors and associate pastors think about the Standards, and the challenges and benefits associated with their adoption.

The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation is entirely voluntary and will not affect your current or future relations with the Diocese or the University of Notre Dame. Information that is obtained from you in connection with this case study will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. Data from the survey will be reported in aggregate form. Your responses will not be identified individually.

To begin the survey immediately, simply click on the link below. Thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact Dr. Jim Frabutt at [jfrabutt@nd.edu](mailto:jfrabutt@nd.edu) or at 574-631-5763.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Gary\\_Case\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Gary_Case_Study)

Follow-Up Survey Reminder

Sent on behalf of James M. Frabutt, Ph.D.

Dear Father:

Sincere thanks to those of you who have taken the time to complete the Standards for Excellence survey. While individual responses remain confidential, the survey software indicates that about 90% of pastors in the Diocese of Gary have not yet responded.

Please consider completing the online survey. The Diocese of Gary is among the first dioceses in the country to implement the Standards for Excellence Code, and others stand to learn a great deal from your experience. Thus, by completing this survey, you can help advance this important work. Please take 10 minutes of your time to provide this critical information. The link below will access the survey directly.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Gary\\_Case\\_Study](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Gary_Case_Study)

Thank you,

James M. Frabutt

## APPENDIX 6

### **Standards For Excellence:**

#### **An Ethics and Accountability Code for Catholic Parishes**

#### **Adaptations for the Diocese of Gary**

#### **Mission Statement of the Diocese of Gary**

**As members of the Body of Christ, the people of the Roman Catholic Community of the Diocese of Gary, diverse but united through Baptism and empowered by the Holy Spirit, nourished by Word and Sacrament, are called to continue the mission of Jesus by being a Sign and instrument of God's kingdom of truth, peace, justice and love.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Lumen Gentium*, (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vat. II), speaks of the Church as the “people of God”, called to proclaim, embody and serve the coming Kingdom of God. It provides for us a vision in which the ordained and laity collaborate together to fulfill the Mission of Christ in this time and place. It is in the parish that the Mission of Christ continues. Therefore, the parish must have the ability to support ministry programs and provide parish structures in which the gifts of time, talent and treasure can best be used.

Our parishes must comply with the Church's own canon law, as well as, local, state and federal laws. Standards for Excellence provides for our parishes benchmarks that will enable the parish to enhance their programs, governance, human resources and financial management. The booklet found in the notebook outlines eight areas and fifty-five Standards that will assist the parishes in strengthening their ministries and operations. Each parish is expected to commit to these Standards, and to work toward implementing them. Some Standards have been adapted to reflect diocesan policies that are already in existence, or to provide a consistent church language.

This study guide is meant to help clarify each of the Standards and the adaptations as needed for our diocese.

## **Mission Statement and Ministry Program**

This section of the Standards focuses on the parish mission, programming and evaluation of programs.

### **Adaptations for Standards #1 thru # 5:**

- #1:** The parish will have a mission statement that;  
Has been developed by the Parish Pastoral Council, and accepted by the community.  
That reflects the diocesan mission statement.
- #2:** The parish will evaluate the mission statement and programs every three years.
- #3 & 4:** The parish will specifically evaluate the cost effectiveness of all programs.

## **Governance and Advisory Bodies**

In this section the Standards focus on the necessity of a parish having strong governance and advisory boards. Canon Law requires that a parish have a Finance Council. Parish Pastoral Councils were mandated by Bishop Melczek in September of 1992.

### **Adaptations for Standards # 6 thru #20:**

- #6:** This Standard reviews the pastor's role, which is supported in canons 519 and 532 of the Code of Canon Law.
- #7 thru 9:** The Finance Council will establish policies for effective management of the parish.  
  
The Finance Council will assist in preparing the annual budget, regularly assess the financial performance, and assure that the parish conforms to diocesan policies.
- # 11:** Employees are not to be voting members of a Parish Pastoral Council or a Parish Finance Council.
- #12:** Finance Councils should have at least 7 adult members, who are unrelated.  
Parish Pastoral Councils should have at least 12 members, none of whom are staff.  
A youth should be included on the Parish Pastoral Council.
- #13:** Membership on the Finance Council should be three years and can be renewed for a second term.  
Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council is a three year term and the member can discern for an additional term. See Pastoral Council manual.
- #18:** Finance Councils will meet a minimum of 4 times a year. Parish Pastoral Councils will meet a minimum of 10 times a year.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The Standards in this section emphasizes everyone in the parish, whether clergy or laity, paid or volunteer must always act in the best interest of the parish.

### **Adaptations for Standards #21 & #22:**

**#21 & 22:** This standard speaks to having a written conflict of interest policy. A template has been included in the implementation packet.

All priests, staff, volunteers must be given a copy of the conflict of interest policy and they must sign it.

## **Human Resources**

In this section, the Standards state that the parish relationship to the ministerial personnel, whether laity or clergy, paid or unpaid, is essential to achieving the parish mission.

### **Adaptations for Standards #23 thru #28**

**#23:** Each parish must send a copy of its personnel policy to the Diocesan Office for Human Resources.

**#25:** Employees will be provided with a copy of the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth** and should acknowledge the receipt of the Charter in writing.

## **Financial and Legal Requirements**

The Standards state that parishes are to have sound financial management, and they must comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including Canon Law.

### **Adaptations for Standards #29 thru #36**

**#29:** The parish will operate in accordance with an annual budget that has been prepared by the Parish Finance Council, and approved by the Parish Pastoral Council.

**#30:** Finance statements must be forwarded annually to the Diocesan Financial Office.

**#31:** All parishes will continue to be audited by diocesan internal auditors on a routine basis. The audited accounts are also submitted to the Diocesan Finance Officer routinely.

**#35:** **This paragraph is replaced by the statement below:**

The parishes and other Church organizations will follow the recommendation and mandate of the Diocesan Insurance Program.

## **Openness**

Parishes are private entities that operate in the name of the Church in service to their members with support from the faithful. Parishes should provide the faithful with information about their mission, ministry program, activities and finances. They should also be accessible and responsive to their members. **(Adapted)**

### **Adaptation for Standards # 37 thru #55**

- #37:**           **Delete:** Line 2 after faithful delete “and the public.”  
**Delete:** Line 4 “corporate board where one exists.”
- #39:**           The parish should have a “representative” who is responsible to assure that parish is complying with both the letter and the spirit of federal and state laws.
- #40:**           Fundraising should demonstrate that it is making steady progress toward achieving its goal. The Parish Finance Council will annually evaluate parish fund raising performance.
- #46:**           The parish cannot sell, rent or exchange mailing lists.

## APPENDIX 7

### Diocesan HR and Finance Policy Training/Support CD

#### SECTION 1

- 101 Equal Employment Opportunity
- 102 Harassment Policy
- 103 Sexual Harassment
- 104 Child Abuse & Sexual Misconduct
- 105 Drug & Alcohol Use Policy
- 106 Ethics and Conduct
- 107 Conflict of Interest Policy
- 108 Personal Relationship Policy
- 109 Whistleblower Policy

#### SECTION 2

- 201 Hiring Procedure
- 202 Pre-Employment Procedure
- 203 Employment Application
- 204 Employment Reference & Background Check
- 205 Search Process
- 206 Hiring Process
- 207 Office Transfer
- 208 Employment Compliance Posting & Reporting

#### SECTION 3

- 301 Employment Category
- 302 Position Description
- 303 Introductory Period
- 304 Personnel Data Changes
- 305 Personnel File Policy & Law
- 306 Performance Evaluation

#### SECTION 4

- 401 Payroll Deductions
- 402 Direct Deposit
- 403 Vacation Policy
- 404 Holiday Policy
- 405 Sick Leave Policy
- 406 Bereavement Leave Policy
- 407 Jury Duty Policy
- 408 Health Insurance Policy
- 409 Life Insurance Policy
- 410 Benefits Continuation (COBRA)
- 411 Workers' Compensation Insurance
- 412 Lay Retirement Plan
- 413 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- 414 Personal Days
- 415 Flextime Scheduling

**SECTION 5**

- 501 Timekeeping Policy
- 502 Travel Pay Policy
- 503 Pay Policy
- 504 Pay Advances Policy
- 505 Pay Deduction Policy
- 506 Employment Termination
- 507 Employment Layoff

**SECTION 6**

- 601 Smoking Policy
- 602 Use of Phone & Mail System
- 603 Computer & Email Usage
- 604 Internet Usage
- 605 Use of Equipment
- 606 Business Travel Expenses
- 607 Visitors in the Workplace
- 608 Emergency Closings
- 609 Cell Phone Usage in the Workplace

**SECTION 7**

- 701 Employment Rules
- 702 Attendance & Punctuality
- 703 Personal Appearance
- 704 Return of Property
- 705 Resignation
- 706 Progressive Discipline
- 707 Conflict Resolution

**SECTION 8**

- Introduction
- Appendix A – Letter of Transfer
- Appendix B – Letter of Appointment
- Appendix C – Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Appendix D – Position Request
- Appendix E – Employment Information
- Appendix F – Employment Application
- Appendix G – Conciliation Procedures
- Appendix H – I9 Verification Form
- Appendix I – Reference Check Form
- Appendix J – Employee Acknowledgement Form
- Appendix K – Criminal Background Check Form
- Appendix L – Conflict of Interest Form
- Appendix M – Personnel File Request
- Appendix N – Progressive Disciplinary

## APPENDIX 8

### Standards for Excellence Educational Resource Packets

The Leadership Roundtable on Church Management offers 22 free educational resource packets for Catholic parishes committed to implementing various portions of the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Catholic Parishes. The educational resource packets include information on the importance of implementing specific standards, justification for the standards, best practices associated with the issue, model procedures and sample policies.

The Standards for Excellence educational resource packets were prepared by conducting an exhaustive review of the literature on the particular topic, pulling the most useful information, creating original materials (including model policies) where the available information is not sufficient, and packaging the materials in an easy to use format.

Collectively, the 22 packets cover each of the 55 standards in the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Catholic Parishes. The following Standards for Excellence educational resource packets are available:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Developing and Revising the Mission Statement  | 11. Financial Planning and Monitoring   |
| 2. Ministry Program Evaluation  | 12. Reporting Financial Improprieties   |
| 3. Program Service – Grievance Procedures, Confidentiality, and Satisfaction of Ministry Program Participants | 13. Financial Policies  |
| 4. Ongoing Planning by Advisory Bodies  | 14. Legal Compliance Checklist  |
| 5. Compensation and Employee Evaluation   | 15. Legal Compliance - Liability Issues   |
| 6. Advisory Bodies' Composition   | 16. Openness  |
| 7. Conduct of Advisory Bodies   | 17. Fundraising Costs   |
| 8. Conflict of Interest   | 18. Fundraising Practices   |
| 9. Personnel Policies and Employee Orientation  | 19. Solicitation and Acceptance of Gifts  |
| 10. Volunteer Policies  | 20. Employment of Fundraising Personnel and Engagement of Fundraising Consultants |
|   | 21. Public Policy Advocacy Promoting Public Participation                         |
|   | 22. Parish's Efforts to Educate the Public  |

To access these resources contact: [Standards@nlrcm.org](mailto:Standards@nlrcm.org)

or visit [www.CatholicStandardsForExcellence.org](http://www.CatholicStandardsForExcellence.org)

## APPENDIX 9

### National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management Standards for Excellence Program for Catholic Parishes

#### Self Assessment Checklist

- Y** if the parish has met the Standard,  
**N** if the parish has not met the Standard, and  
**M** if the parish may be meeting the Standard or is partially in compliance

#### I. Mission Statement and Ministry Program

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mission statement  
Written mission statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Parish Organizational Evaluation  
Mission statement and ministry programs review
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Ministry Program Evaluation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Formal evaluation program reviewing efficiency and effectiveness (including cost and outcomes)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Includes input from participants/recipients
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Program evaluation used to strengthen effectiveness and make programmatic changes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Ministry Program Service
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Confidentiality policy
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Measures satisfaction of program participants/recipients
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Grievance procedures in place for ministry program participants/recipients

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

#### II. Governance and Advisory Bodies

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Advisory Bodies' Responsibilities
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Parish pastoral and finance councils engage in long term and short term planning for the parish
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Parish pastoral and finance councils evaluate success of parish's programs towards achieving the mission

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Parish pastoral and finance council policies for effective management of the parish (financial and personnel)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ Finance council approval of parish's budget and assessment of financial performance in relation to the budget.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Finance council review of percentages of the parish's resources spent on ministry programs, administration, and fundraising
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Finance Council and Pastoral Council review the overall salary structure of the parish
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Advisory Bodies' Composition  
Personally committed council members who possess specific skills needed to accomplish mission
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. No undue influence of employees serving on parish advisory councils
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Size of pastoral and finance councils is at least 5; preferably greater than 7
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Term limits for pastoral and finance council members in place
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Pastoral council membership reflects the diversity of the communities served by the parish
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Council members serve without compensation (exception: reimbursement for direct expenses)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Advisory Bodies' Conduct  
Pastoral and finance councils educate, train and develop members, annually evaluates their own performance, and selects new members
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Written expectations for council members provided
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Minimum of four council meetings per year
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Council policies on attendance and participation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Written meeting minutes distributed

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

### **III. Conflict of interest**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Conflict of Interest Policy  
Written policy including conduct, disclosure and review
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Conflict of Interest Statements  
Statement declaring disclosures, signed annually

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

### **IV. Human Resources**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Personnel Policies  
\_\_\_\_\_ See page 18 of the Standards booklet for a list of the areas that should be included in personnel policies  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personnel policies based on diocesan policies
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Volunteer Policies

- \_\_\_\_\_ Initial assessment and screening
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment to and training for appropriate responsibilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing supervision, evaluation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal development
- \_\_\_\_\_ Opportunities for advancement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Personnel policies specify how the Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth is being implemented
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Employee Performance Evaluation  
Written job descriptions for all employees identifying roles and responsibilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Written annual performance evaluation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Employee Orientation including review of personnel policies

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

## V. Financial and Legal Issues

- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Financial Accountability  
Pastor and finance council approve annual budget
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Timely financial reports, with at least quarterly internal financial statements with material variation between actual and budgeted
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. Independent audit for parishes with annual revenue in excess of \$300,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. Confidential means to report suspected financial impropriety (whistle blower protection in place)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Written financial policies in conformity with diocesan policies governing:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Investment of the assets of the parish,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Internal control procedures,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Purchasing practices,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Policy on unrestricted current net assets, and
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition of assets in case of dissolution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Legal Compliance and Accountability  
Compliance with canon, federal, state, and local laws.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. Assessment of level of insurance coverage (general liability and Directors and Officers liability insurance)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. Internal review of the parish's compliance with known existing legal, regulatory and financial reporting requirements

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

## VI. Openness

- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. Annual Report, available upon request including:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Mission

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Basic financial data
- \_\_\_\_\_ Names of parish corporate board (where applicable), pastoral council and finance council
- \_\_\_\_\_ Names of management staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. Public Access  
Opportunity for members of the public to communicate with parish representative
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. At least one staff person is responsible for the parish complying with disclosure requirements

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

## VII. Fundraising

- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. Fundraising Activities  
Reasonable fundraising costs over time; parish should realize revenue from fundraising and other development activities that are at least three times the amount spent on conducting them
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. Accurate and truthful solicitation and promotional materials
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. Honor the statements made in fundraising appeals
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. Honor the known intentions of donors
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. Donor Relationships and Privacy.  
Respect the privacy of donors and safeguard confidentiality of donor information
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. Provide donors the opportunity to remain anonymous
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. Provide donors an opportunity to have their names removed from any mailing lists which are sold, rented, or exchanged
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. Honor donor requests to curtail repeated mailings or telephone solicitations from in-house lists
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. Solicitations free from undue influence or excessive pressure
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. Acceptance of Gifts
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Acceptance of gifts policy, in conformity with canon law
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tax-related documentation provided for donors
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. Fundraisers  
Fundraising personnel compensation not based on percentage or commission formula
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. Use only of paid fundraising consultants who are registered with applicable federal, state, and local agencies
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. Exercise control over any staff, clergy, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, or businesses who solicit contributions on behalf of the parish

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

## VIII. Public Life and Public Policy

- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. Written Policy on Public Policy Advocacy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. Public Education  
Assurance that publicly distributed educational information is in conformity with USCCB guidelines, factually accurate, nonpartisan and provides sufficient context
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. Promoting Public Participation in Public Life

Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:

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