

Notre Dame Catholic School

School Improvement Report

May 20, 2009

Notre Dame Catholic School (NDCS) was re-accredited in 2006 by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC). This is a follow-up summary of our efforts over the past three years. The re-accreditation process takes place every 7 years and involves an extremely thorough examination of the entire school community. This was accomplished through the hard work, dedication and support of the school's administration, pastors, faculty, staff, parents, students, feeder parishes and many other community members. This collaborative effort is one of the strengths in our school community and helps us to accomplish our goals and continue the process of improvement from year to year.

Our re-accreditation process involved:

- ✓ Completion of surveys from the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) by the school's stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and community members) about our mission, the quality of the educational program, and goals for improvement.
- ✓ The data from the surveys was analyzed to develop a profile of the school community, to examine how the school is meeting the educational needs of its students, and to establish goals for improving student learning.
- ✓ NDCS hosted a visiting team assembled by the Florida Catholic Conference to review and analyze the report submitted by our school. The goal of the team was to confirm that NDCS is accurately reflected in the written report, identify positive aspects of the school and make suggestions on how to improve the quality of student education.
- ✓ The accreditation team:
 - ☑ Verified that NDCS is in compliance with all of the educational standards set forth by the Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation program.
 - ☑ Highly complemented Notre Dame, noting the "friendly and nurturing learning environment; the dedicated and professional administration, faculty and staff; the well-mannered, friendly and enthusiastic students; the comprehensive school curriculum; the school's commitment to technology; and the outstanding support of the parents and school community." Additionally, the Catholic identity of the school is evident in every aspect of school life at Notre Dame.
 - ☑ Determined that the school community accurately identified measurable goals to improve the already excellent educational program delivered by NDCS.

Our Commitment to Improvement...

The improvement process is ongoing and extremely beneficial to upholding the quality of education at Notre Dame. It is a continuous process of re-evaluating and improving our school. The administration and faculty work to prepare students to be successful, hard working individuals in a society that is constantly changing. Assurances that working toward the improvement of the quality of student education is always taking place at Notre Dame is provided by the fact that a first year and third year review are conducted during the seven year time frame between re-accreditations. Our school is currently working on its third year review.

Helping students improve their learning skills is an ongoing goal at our school. The administration and faculty are always researching new techniques, reading current literature, and participating in professional development opportunities such as in-services and college courses, in order to achieve this goal. Thanks to the dedication of our school community, the following improvements have been made:

1. **Communication skills** - Written and oral communication are skills that are always being emphasized at Notre Dame. The teachers have developed a school-wide vision for writing. The students in each grade are working on shared writing and interactive writing, where groups develop stories together, watching sentence structure, developing main ideas, and arranging details in sequential order. Writing prompts are given throughout the year and writing portfolios are being developed in order that comparisons can be made on the progress students are making from the beginning of the school year to the end. Students are working on oral communication as well, from sharing Show and Tell items in Kindergarten, to sharing writing projects and book reports in the primary grades, to presenting biographies and research projects at the intermediate grade level.
2. **Critical Thinking & Reasoning Skills** - The students are strengthening their critical thinking and reasoning skills in the area of mathematics. Maintenance skills are being utilized every day at each grade level; the students use flash cards, problems of the day, etc. to review skills that have been taught previously. The students are always working on improving their problem solving skills and computation skills. Our Math ITBS scores are already showing improvement as a result of the work being done in this area. The administration is looking into purchasing new math books for the upcoming school year if the budget permits.
3. **Technology** - Introducing and continually instructing students to progress in present and future technology is being successfully implemented at Notre Dame. The students are working on Kidspiration, Inspiration, Power Point, graphic organizers, keyboarding, Word, and Excel for graphing. They apply what they learn to their other academic areas; from using power point to present book reports, to working with graphic organizers when comparing story characters or stories, as well as applying their use across the curriculum

such as in the area of Social Studies, to exercising their keyboarding skills when typing up reports or research projects.

4. **Community Involvement** - Reaching out to the parish and surrounding communities, as well as bringing the love of Jesus to missions in other parts of the world, is always part of life at NDCS. A few examples of this would be: collecting food for St. Frances Cabrini parish for Thanksgiving, gathering clothing and toys for Holy Ground for Christmas, monthly collections of various necessities for the people of Hernando County throughout the school year, making cards for area nursing homes, as well as adopting mission children in El Salvador, India, Africa, Haiti, and the Philippines. Living our faith, bringing Jesus to others, is of the utmost importance to our school community.

There is so much to be proud of here at Notre Dame! Our marketing committee is working diligently to promote our school to the surrounding communities. We thank them for their tireless efforts and we thank you for your support in helping Notre Dame be the very best that it can be. Our continued improvement also depends on your suggestions toward the achievement of our goals.

We look forward to our continued team work as we prepare for our next re-accreditation visit and celebration of 25 years of service to the Hernando County community. We celebrate our accomplishments united in faith, inspired by the Holy Spirit and with deepest gratitude to everyone in our school community!