

MOUNT ROYAL ACADEMY



Visiting Team Report

May 28, 2015

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Mount Royal Academy History Timeline

Founding family pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory

September, 1994: School opens in Newport Hospital

1999: Campus relocation to Seven Hearths Inn, Sunapee

Entrance into National Association of Private Catholic and Independent Schools (NAPCIS)

Addition of high school grade levels

Construction completed on college preparatory high school building

December 15, 2006: Recognition by Bishop McCormack as a Catholic school, giving us the gift of the Eucharist on campus

August, 2011: Construction completed on St. Joseph's Center (gymnasium, lunch room, art room, and computer lab)

February, 2012: Demolition of Seven Hearths Inn

July, 2012: Construction completed on PreK-8 elementary school building

July, 2012: Acceptance into New Hampshire Interscholastic Association (NHIA)

September, 2012: Campus and mission rededicated by Bishop Libasci

Criterion I: Integrity, Missions and Objectives

Commendations:

1. A faithful adherence to the mission statement. (SS p. 7)
2. A commendable record of student achievement. (SS p. 7)
3. Affirmation from former students and graduates. (SS p. 7)
4. To the outward expression of the Catholic identity of the school (SS p. 7; Obs.; Int.)

Recommendations:

1. That the Board and Headmaster cultivate alumni relationships and hold annual alumni events at the school. (SS p. 7)
2. That the Headmaster create greater visibility to the general public to provide more educational choice for families seeking excellence in education. (SS p. 7)
3. That the Headmaster promote more occasions and opportunities for parents and faculty to foster more conversations and communication about the ideals of Catholic education. (SS p. 7)
4. That the Board and Headmaster reinstate the tradition of renewing Baptismal vows, which include a Profession of Faith (Apostles Creed), at the annual signing of the Oath of Fidelity ceremony. (Int.)
5. That the Board and Headmaster plan an annual retreat for the faculty and staff that provides for the spiritual development of the individual, while reinforcing the school community's unity and dedication to the vision and mission of the school. (Int.) (we moved this from Criterion III)

Criterion II: Curriculum

Commendations:

1. Teachers consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, and as needed supplement with resources to bolster to student achievement. Teachers are very sensitive to individual students' needs and try to respond with appropriate modifications. (SS p. 9)
2. The goal of evaluating two subjects per year is very realistic and beneficial. (SS p. 9)
3. Mount Royal graduates have successfully matriculated to post-secondary institutions since 2000. Over 90% of students have been accepted into their first-choice college. (SS p. 9)
4. School performance on standardized testing is well above average. (SS p. 9)

Recommendations:

1. That the Headmaster and Faculty respect the three natural stages of learning (grammatical, logical, and rhetorical) when selecting academic resources and grade-level programs. (SS p. 9)
2. That the Board of Directors should determine Mount Royal Academy's educational philosophy, and ensure the school website and print materials accurately reflect the curriculum. (SS p. 9)
3. That the Board of Directors should determine if the school should solely pursue content that is completely aligned with a classical curriculum, or continue to utilize a classical approach, respecting the developmental stages of learning. (SS p. 9)
4. That the Board of Directors establish and the Headmaster implement an academic policy to identify, monitor and support students who are having difficulty meeting grade level expectations. (SS p. 9)
5. That the Board of Directors and Headmaster set up a process to oversee curriculum decisions. A Board member shall be appointed to serve as a liaison between the Board and faculty. The Board liaison, Headmaster, and faculty will collaborate to review and/or create curriculum. (SS p. 9)
6. That the Board of Directors and Headmasters ensure that common time is available for faculty members to discuss issues related to curriculum and assessment. (Int.)

Criterion III: Faculty

Commendations:

1. The school has, in recent years, begun to utilize interview committees in the selection process, moving away from new hires being determined solely by the Headmaster. (SS p. 11)
2. The school has successfully adhered to hiring practicing Catholics as full-time faculty. (SS p. 11)
3. The school's expectation of fidelity to the Magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church is clearly stated and understood by all faculty and staff. (Int.; Exh.)
4. The school is reviewing and formalizing its teacher evaluation process. The school piloted the Danielson Framework for Teacher Evaluation during the 2014-2015 academic year. (SS p. 11)

Recommendations:

1. That the Board should create a more formal process for the review of salary and benefits. The Board should offer and differentiate between sick, personal and professional time, in particular reviewing bereavement and maternity leave. (SS p. 11)
2. That the Board and Headmaster continue to work toward formalizing the teacher evaluation process. (SS p. 11)
3. That the Board and Headmaster find ways to financially support administration and faculty development. (SS p. 11)
4. That the Board require all full-time faculty to obtain a statement of eligibility for state certification. The board should work toward setting aside the necessary funding for teachers to complete the certification process and maintain state certification. (SS p. 11)
5. That the Board form a mediation team, consisting of the Headmaster, a veteran teacher, and a Board member, to act as an intermediary body if a grievance cannot be resolved between the Headmaster and a faculty member. All grievances shall go to the mediation team once an impasse is reached between the Headmaster and a faculty member. If a grievance reaches the mediation team, the team should be required to respond to the faculty member and grant meeting time regarding the conflict. (SS p. 11, 12)

Criterion IV: Students

Commendations:

1. Significant discipline issues are dealt with immediately and with appropriate consequences. Teachers report all discipline issues on My Student Progress. Documentation is good, parents are notified immediately, and consequences are appropriate. (SS p. 13)
2. Individual attention is given to the particular needs of students and families in setting both admissions and discipline, to the end of achieving the school's mission of educating the whole child. Private tours and/or information sessions are available to inquiring families year-round. (SS p. 13)
3. Parents are encouraged to speak directly to the teacher when they have a grievance and most problems are resolved at this level. (SS p. 14)
4. The school is effective in communicating with families in a timely manner information related to the experiences of the students. This commendation extends to the Headmaster as he was reported to be a most effective communicator (Int.)
5. That the school has expanded its extracurricular offerings as the school has grown. For example, it has been easy to start swim, track and drama club. (Int.)

Recommendations:

1. That the Board and Headmaster establish an admissions committee to review applications, make recommendations, and share pertinent information with appropriate faculty members. (SS p. 14)
2. That the Headmaster consider re-creating a mentor program for new families. (SS p.14)
3. That the Board and Headmaster consider creating a process for evaluating whether or not to accept students into Garden (Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten). (SS p.14)
4. That the Headmaster and Faculty create a serious yet formative probationary period for students in middle and high school. (SS p.14)
- ~~5. That the Board and Headmaster change fighting policy in Student Handbook. (SS p.14)~~
(Moved to Criterion I)
6. That the Board insert parent representative to the Board into a formal position in the grievance process. (SS p.14)

Criterion V: Facilities

Commendations:

1. The buildings are maintained daily; essential cleaning is completed, including disinfecting all trouble areas. All buildings on the school campus are of recent construction (within 10 years), and are built with solid concrete exterior walls. (SS p.15)
2. A Facilities Director is employed year round; major maintenance projects are completed during the summer months (stripping/waxing floors; painting). (SS p.15)
3. Essential services are sub-contracted to ensure professionalism and safety (ie: snow removal and HVAC maintenance). The school has improved relations with vendors that supply products necessary for the maintenance of the facilities, as well as contractors. (SS p.16)
4. The school facilities have afforded a means of community outreach and improved public relations, both by utilizing the space for school functions open to the public, and by offering the use of the buildings to other organizations in the surrounding community. (SS p.16)
5. The school is actively working to improve security throughout the facilities in consultation with local authorities. (SS p.16)

Recommendations:

1. That the Board continue to evaluate the needs of a growing student population – with regard to classroom space and athletic fields (Int.).
2. That the Board and Headmaster implement strategies to make the gymnasium more fitting for liturgies – for example utilizing a floor runner or raising the altar so that everyone can easily view it. (Obs.)
3. That the Facilities Director improve organization of maintenance materials. (SS p.16)
4. That the Board consider that the Facilities Director could accomplish more if 40 hours are allotted on the budget. (SS p.16)
5. That the Headmaster and Facilities Director track information and data related to the overall performance of the facilities needs to take place. (SS p.16)
6. That the Board collect rent from community groups that utilize the facilities regularly to partly fund maintenance of the facilities. (SS p.16)
7. That the Facilities Director establish a list of needed repairs through electronic means that is accessible to all staff for the reporting of maintenance needs. This list could be

regularly reviewed and prioritized by the Headmaster in conjunction with the Facilities Director. (SS p.16)

8. That the Headmaster and Facilities Director continue to improve security measures throughout the facilities as recommended by local authorities. (SS p.16)

Criterion VI: Governance

Commendations:

1. The visiting committee comends the Headmaster for effective management of organizational change during a challenging transitional period of the school (Int.)
2. The Headmaster is open and eager to receive feedback from faculty, staff, parents and students. (SS p.19)
4. The budget is carefully planned and regularly monitored. (SS p.19)
5. School has been generous in providing financial aid in the past. (SS p.19)

Recommendations:

1. That the Board continue to take steps to ensure that operational expenses are adequately addressed and budgeted for within the budgeting process. (Int.; Exh.)
2. That the Board and the Headmaster take steps to ensure that the faculty and student handbooks are reviewed and updated annually such that policies and procedures meet the needs of the students and are compliant with State law (Int.; Exh.)
3. That the Board increase communication between the Board of Directors and the school community. (SS p.19)
4. That the Board establish and document school policies. (SS p.19)
5. That the Board increase the financial responsibility of all families in a way that is impartial and equitable for both the community and the school. (SS p.19)
6. That the Board create a Strategic Planning Committee to assess possibilities for future growth and implement plans to meet the needs of an increasing student population. (SS p.19)
7. That the Board consider strategies to foster collaboration between the Board and other stakeholders within the MRA community. (Int.)