



The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

The Episcopal Church in Western Washington

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“To Teach All Nations:” Establishing Episcopal School Standards for The Diocese of Olympia

A Report of the Bishop's Task Force on Episcopal School
Standards

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From the Office of the Bishop

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Introduction

In May 2010, Bishop Rickel announced the establishment of a working group to develop standards for those parishes and missions of the diocese that elect to operate schools. Included in this group of parishes called to such an educational mission are those parishes or missions that operate elementary or high schools, pre-school programs, and day-care centers. In addition, the working group determined that those parishes and missions that rent space to educational organizations should meet appropriate standards as well.

By the end of May 2010, an eight person working group had been formed and began their deliberations. The group reviewed a wide array of educational standards drawn from several national accrediting agencies and professional educational groups such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, The National Association for Episcopal Schools, Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools, and the Diocesan Commission on Schools for the Diocese of Los Angeles, and the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools.

The group met in person in August 2010 to review its over-all work tasks. An early question was the number and type of educational institutions that operated in the diocese. Diane Wells, diocesan archivist, helped greatly in producing an up-dated list of schools, pre-schools, and day care centers operated by parishes and missions within the diocese. There are currently twenty-four educational institutions in the diocese that fit the working group’s operational criteria.

The group met again in October 2010 to prepare a first set of possible standard topics, based on its analysis of the existing school standards. After considerable discussion, the group settled on a list of ten topics ranging from Episcopal Identity to Facilities. Working group members who were unable to attend this meeting received these ten standards and made comments about them serially.

In December 2010, the group met again to review the standards. Before beginning detailed work on the specific content of each standard, the group realized that it needed to hear from representatives of schools, parishes, and missions of the diocese who would be affected by the creation of these standards. In order to give sufficient time to alert people, and to have the Bishop available to participate in part of the meeting, the date for this meeting was set for March 23, 2011. Eleven schools or pre-schools were represented at this meeting. The discussions were lively and extremely helpful to the working group.

Following the March 2011 meeting with “stakeholder” groups, the work group drafted a set of ten standards based upon its research and the input derived from the “stakeholder” group meeting.

The group further developed an adoption timeline and a possible structure for how these standards were to be administered by the diocese.

As the group appointed by the bishop approached completion of the first draft of standards which would be sent to the bishop, it was recognized that one of the standards, (Relationships) had been covered under other standards and it was deleted from the original list.

The work group refined and edited its standards over the summer of 2011. During that period of refinement the group determined that it was in disagreement over the actual scope of these standards. The key issue centered on Standard Two – Episcopal Character. Some members of the working group felt strongly that this standard should not apply to all schools operated or supported by Episcopal parishes or missions. Other members felt that these standards must apply to any school operated by or supported by an Episcopal parish or mission. Moreover, there was division over the applicability of these standards in cases where the Episcopal parish or mission rented space to a school. After several attempts at compromise, the working group decided that it would defer this decision to the policy-making groups of the diocese and submitted its report in September of 2011. Part III of this report sets out several policy options for the diocese to consider before adopting this report.

The draft report was sent to the individuals and organizations that participated in the March 2011 “stakeholder” meeting in Mid-August of 2011 to afford them an opportunity to review the standards prior to the submission of the final report to the Bishop’s Office.

PART I - The Purpose of Setting Standards

One of the primary purposes of creating standards is to ensure that competent practice is created and maintained across organizations or groups. It is a form of quality assurance and communicates expected normative behavior to participants and consumers alike. Standards are more broadly conceived and written than technical rules or specific instructions; they permit some level of local variations but establish a “floor” below which the organizations or groups operating under the standards cannot fall.

Accreditation agencies and other professional groups have long used standards as a means for maintaining the work of their constituent members. Typically, in such cases, the standards indirectly shape the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of those who participate in the life of the organizations that meet the standards. That is, rather than directly test the knowledge and skills

of those who are served by the organization, it is the organization that meets the standards and, indirectly, serves to ensure its clients meet certain levels of knowledge and skill. The individuals are not tested in any way but the organizations that provide the services to those individuals have been required to meet certain standards thus implying a level of competence in the individuals themselves.

In the case of creating standards for Episcopal Schools in the Diocese of Olympia, our primary purpose is not certifying to the over-all educational quality of the school, or claiming that the graduates of those schools possess particular knowledge or skills by virtue of attending those schools. Rather, the Diocese is ensuring that schools that operate under the auspices of the Episcopal Church hold to certain forms of behavior that are in keeping with the values and beliefs of the Episcopal Church. Thus, the Diocese of Olympia believes that its own standards are essential to permitting schools to use the Episcopal name or to enjoy the sponsorship of the Diocese directly or indirectly.

Additionally, the Bishop and the diocesan governance structure, as owners of all facilities and properties of the diocese, have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that all activities that take place within these facilities do so in accord with the standards of conduct established by the Diocese. The Bishop, as the Corporation Sole, and the established governance entities of the diocese have a compelling interest in the educational activities of the parishes and missions, and this compelling interest extends to those parishes and missions that rent their facilities to educational organizations. Canon Nine, Section Eight of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Olympia states that vestries shall “support the Rector in preventing use of church buildings for any purpose prohibited by the Constitution and Canons of the Church, or for any purpose unbecoming to the Church of God.” In addition, the diocese has adopted policy regarding the use or renting of church property that clearly states the organization renting or using church property must be a nonprofit corporation under Washington law, the intended use must be eleemosynary¹, and the use of the income generated be reasonable and devoted to the operation and maintenance of the church property.

PART II Proposed Standards

1. Mission
2. Episcopal Character
3. Governance
4. Faculty/Staff
5. Finances

¹ Eleemosynary activities are charitable in nature and scope. The word derives from the Latin for “alms.”

6. Health and Safety
7. Facilities
8. Programs
9. Assessment

1. Mission

1.1. There shall be a high degree of congruence between the stated mission, the philosophy of the school as an educational institution, and its actual program.

- a. The mission is clearly understood by and published to the board members, administration, professional staff, parents, students and those responsible for governance, and is used in planning and decision making. It is visibly present on brochures, parent, teacher and board handbooks, and reviewed at least once every five years.

- b. The purposes and objectives for which the school exists shall include a clearly stated educational philosophy that addresses the needs of students and a commitment to creating an environment which encourages freedom of inquiry and the respectful exchange of diverse viewpoints.

2. Episcopal Character of the School

2.1. The Episcopal identity of the school shall be expressed within its mission and governance structure and organization.

- a. The mission of the school recognizes that the Episcopal ethos of the school makes a difference in the daily life of the school community.

- b. The school shall clearly define in its governing documents its relationship to the Episcopal Church and its sponsoring organization, if any, and the responsibilities of each. It will provide in its bylaws a clear statement about its church relationship to the vestry, in the case of a parish school, to the bishop in the case of a diocesan or mission school, or as an independent school.

- c. Board members shall participate in an orientation that includes information about what it means to be an Episcopal school, including best governance practices and the role of all key leaders, intentional pluralism in admissions, religious programming and worship in the school, the philosophy of open inquiry in instruction, and support for service learning. In a parish day school, invitations should be extended to the board members, other school

leaders, the student body and their families, to attend church events, introducing them to the parish that hosts the school.

d. Schools designated as parish day schools shall clearly define how shared space issues and joint financial obligations are handled (i.e., who pays whom, for what), as applicable.

e. In a parish day school the vestry shall be invited to an annual orientation about the work of the school to increase an understanding of the complexities and differences between the institutions of school and church, including the unique components of Episcopal character in a parish day school. Additionally, invitations should be extended to the vestry and other church leaders to attend school events, introducing them to the community of families that supports the school.

2.2. The school shall include both worship and religious studies in its program to reflect a balance of faith and reason in the Episcopal tradition and respect for individual beliefs.

a. Opportunities shall be provided for regular worship that is age appropriate and in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, as well as the "doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church." There shall be opportunities for student participation in worship. (What is age appropriate will need to be determined by the Parish Clergy, and the Head of School or the Head of School designee).

b. Worship experiences shall be sensitive to the diversity of religious identity represented by students and faculty while remaining faithful to the Episcopal foundation, practices and traditions.

c. The school shall incorporate religious education in its instructional program where both secular knowledge and Christian faith are lifted up, and proselytizing is avoided.

d. Religious studies for older students shall be as rigorous as other academic courses and include Christian foundations, other world faith traditions, ethics and moral reasoning, and religion in American history and contemporary life. Religious studies for pre-school and elementary programs shall be developmentally appropriate and stress commonalities rather than differences between individuals and cultures.

e. The school shall show evidence of the utilization of its religious goals and objectives in meeting the needs of the school community and providing appropriate pastoral care when needed.

2.3. *The administration of the program reflects the Episcopal commitment to be inviting and welcoming toward students from varied religious, cultural, sexual orientation and economic backgrounds and family situations who would benefit from this program.*

- a. The head of school shall hold a personal faith commitment supportive of the spiritual mission and program of the school, shall understand and support the canonical structure of the Episcopal church, as well as the role and responsibility of the ecclesiastical head of the sponsoring body, and shall act as the primary ambassador and advocate for Episcopal identity.
- b. The school’s key administrative leaders, including admissions officer, division heads, and development officers are responsible for understanding, communicating and supporting the school’s Episcopal identity, especially when representing the school to prospective families.
- c. The school’s teachers, assistants and extracurricular staff shall understand and support the school’s spiritual mission and Episcopal identity. The school shall provide enlightened discourse about what it means to be an Episcopal school so all faculty and staff can express with confidence the school’s philosophy with parents, students, and each other.
- d. Admission policies in the school shall actively invite inquiries from students of diverse backgrounds, who will benefit from the program. The school shall provide financial assistance to otherwise qualified students who are eligible to enroll, being intentional in its efforts to support this need in the budgeting process.²
- e. The head of school and rector, in a parish day school, shall seek ways to build a collegial, mutually supportive relationship.

2.4. *The school shall require high standards of professional educational excellence and celebrate the joy of discovery and new learning with the students.*

- a. The culture of the classrooms values the search for knowledge, with the recognition that our understanding from the past may grow and change; the processes of open inquiry, with thoughtful consideration of the questions of others; and the imperative of personal accountability.
- b. The school shall design a curriculum that provides both substantive foundational skills and challenging applications to teach students an appreciation of the common goal of

² This standard does not require that all students who need financial assistance receive it. It requires an intentional plan for providing financial support that is shown in policy, practice, and in the budget. The percentages of students requesting aid and the percentage receiving aid must be shown in the report.

contributing to the well-being of the world which the students will inherit and one day pass on to others.

c. The school shall continually encourage professional development in current best professional practices, comprehensive curriculum development, and graceful inclusivity in the relationships between students and faculty, all of which are hallmarks of Episcopal schools.

2.5. *The school shall provide opportunities for student participation in outreach projects.*

a. Experiences in service learning shall promote recognition that we are all God’s children in need of compassion, embraced as brothers and sisters, seeking to be understood, respected, and encouraged. For middle and high schools, service learning shall be required of all students. At other levels, service learning that is developmentally appropriate is strongly encouraged.

b. The school shall explore ways to coordinate efforts with its parish or its diocese to support outreach projects.

3. Governance

3.1. *There shall be provision in the school's bylaws for a board of trustees which shall be elected or appointed according to clearly established guidelines that shall advance the school's mission and vision. The board's membership, structure, policies, and practices shall support the school's long-term viability and goals, and must clearly state the Board's relationship to the Vestry of the church.*³

a. The board shall generate the resources necessary for providing and maintaining safe and adequate physical facilities, sufficient staffing, and appropriate instructional resources.

b. The board shall honor the contractual commitments made to students and staff by providing a full year of programming, and avoid mid-year disruptions which potentially harm the culture within a school and its reputational sensibilities outside the school.

3.2. *The size and composition of the board shall reflect the expertise and diversity needed to achieve the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the school. Recruitment shall link a trustee's potential contribution to the short and long-term goals of the board.*

³ In cases where the school is a direct activity of the parish, Vestry may serve as the Board of Trustees of the School and will be expected to attend to all aspects of the governance standard.

- a. There shall be a plan for the succession of leadership on the board to smooth transitions and sustain the momentum of ongoing board work.
- b. Board members shall be generous with their commitment to advancement of the school, reflected in part by regular attendance at all meetings, participation in major school events, and a willingness to participate in the school’s Annual Fund campaigns.
- c. The Rector or Vicar, or his or her appointee shall serve as chair of the Board.

3.3. *The work of the board shall focus on fiduciary, strategic, and generative tasks.*

- a. The board shall create Vestry approved bylaws that include duties of loyalty to the school, compliance with the rules of conduct articulated in the board handbook, and care in all actions and communications.
- b. The board shall assume responsibility, in cooperation with the Vestry, Head of School and Rector or Vicar, for mitigating risk to the school, be it strategic, operational, financial, or legal. The board shall review the school’s income statement and comparison to the approved budget monthly and review reports about other operational issues regularly.
- c. The board shall rely on teamwork and robust, candid discourse in its meetings. Board decisions shall be approved by the majority of trustees, rather than one committee or one individual. Additionally, major decisions shall require a defined “super-majority” vote of approval, and the approval of the Vestry of the Church.
- d. The board shall keep records of meetings while keeping deliberations confidential. It shall confine its communication processes outside of board meetings to unified, constructive, and supportive information.
- e. The work of the board should be initially addressed in committees whose specific duties are outlined, whose members bring skill and insight to the tasks on hand, and which meet regularly. Committees shall be encouraged to recruit non-board individuals with specific expertise to enhance the work of the Board.
- f. The board shall have processes to assess, improve, and sustain its effectiveness through an evaluation of its work corporately and individually.
- g. The board shall develop, follow, update, and support a comprehensive strategic plan.

h. The school shall articulate a policy concerning the location and accessibility of essential records in the event of the permanent closure of the school (specifically, employment records and student records for graduating 12th graders).

3.4. The Rector or Vicar, in consultation with the Board shall employ the head of school as its sole employee, delegate the administrative functions of the school to the head of school, and shall respect the boundaries which separate board and administrative roles.

a. It shall be clear that the Church School has one employee – the Head of School, and the Head of School has one employer – the Rector or Vicar.

b. The board and Rector or Vicar shall nurture and support the head of school with a process of regular communication and annual evaluation based on clearly established criteria and an understood procedure which is ethical, fair, and provides for due process.

c. The Head of School shall have a written contract which addresses issues of evaluation, compensation, renewal, non-renewal, and termination. To encourage stability for the school, the Head of School shall be employed with a rolling and/or multi-year contract, renewed pending a satisfactory annual evaluation.

d. The board and Rector or Vicar shall have a policy concerning protocols for addressing conflicts with the Head of School before differences escalate to a crisis stage.

e. The board and Rector or Vicar shall work cooperatively and supportively with the Head of School to encourage a well-planned and reassuring transition for the school during periods of administrative change in the school.

4. Faculty/Staff

4.1. All faculty and staff shall be qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and experience and shall engage in ongoing professional development.

a. Teachers of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers up to age 3 shall have no less than a Child Development Certificate (CDC or CDA) or an Associate’s Degree (AAS) reflecting specialization in child development. Teachers with other forms of certification, e.g. Montessori certification, may submit evidence of their training. Teachers of children age 4 and older shall have no less than an appropriate baccalaureate degree.⁴ Assistants and

⁴ Institutions that have teachers with less than a baccalaureate degree must provide alternative evidence of teacher competence and/or a plan to bring all teachers up to that level.

extended care staff are not required to have college degrees but may have other child-care related experience.

b. The school shall utilize adequate procedures for recruiting, screening and interviewing prospective faculty and staff, and each shall have appropriate criminal background and reference checks. Recruitment shall also encourage good-faith efforts to encourage candidates representing diversity for the school to apply. The Staff Handbook should address school policies on conflict of interest in the hiring process.

c. The school does not discriminate against any person in employment or otherwise because of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or age in accordance with state or federal law or regulations and The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.

d. Faculty and staff shall receive an orientation that includes information about their roles and responsibilities, governance organization, school policies including confidentiality and professional conduct, and other information set forth in the Staff and Parent Handbooks.

e. The school shall have a required program for on-going professional growth and development for faculty, staff, and administration which is related to improved instruction and increased learning.

f. Each member of the faculty and the staff shall be clearly informed of his /her compensation, terms of employment and primary responsibilities. Every effort will be made to be equitable in terms of the total load of primary responsibilities and other assignments and in the development of fair personnel policies, salaries and benefits. Compensation packages shall be sufficient to attract and retain qualified teachers.

g. There shall be an understood program of supervision and regular evaluation of individual faculty and staff performance, and understood procedures for non-renewal and/or termination of employment.

h. Faculty and staff interaction with students shall be appropriate, encouraging, and constructive, and shall reflect the highest standard of professional conduct, recognizing the innate vulnerability of students of all ages.

i. There shall be adequate procedures for identifying changing needs and priorities that determine faculty and staffing requirements.

j. The professional staff shall be involved in the review, planning, development and evaluation of the school's programs. There shall be adequate opportunities for communication and focused professional conversations during faculty meetings to facilitate effective collaboration.

k. All members of the faculty and staff, including extracurricular staff, shall receive training in *Safe Guarding God's Children*, and Red Cross equivalent of first aid and C.P.R. that is age appropriate to population served.

l. Classroom substitutes shall receive an orientation about the school's mission and philosophy, the scope of their responsibilities, and school policies relevant to their responsibilities.

m. All faculty and staff shall participate in an annual in service that addresses the policies of the school related to safety, health and injury management, and the supervision of students.

4.2 The school's operations are in compliance with relevant local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

5. Finances

5.1 The school shall employ sound financial planning and management policies and procedures, including a formal budget-making process, along with appropriate board of trustees' oversight.

a. The school shall be a legal entity or part of a legal entity, which is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. It shall acquire and maintain 501(c)(3) non-profit status or be part of an institution that has that status by the Internal Revenue Service.

b. The school shall employ sound accounting methods and practices as prescribed by GAAP, Generally Accepted Accounting Practices.

c. All funds generated by any school activity or organization shall be recorded in the school's or church's books of accounts and shall be under the direct control of the school and/or church.

d. The school shall have a financial audit or review annually. Schools with total budgetary revenues of \$500,000 or more shall have an annual, independent audit of the school's financial books by a CPA. Once the school has had an audit, schools may alternate audits and reviews, provided that there are no more than two reviews between audits. Schools

with total budgetary revenues of \$500,000 or less may instead have an annual review performed by an independent auditor.

e. The school shall seek to minimize the risk of injury to its students, staff and faculty and shall seek to minimize the risk of financial loss to the school by having a risk management program in place that includes purchasing adequate insurance coverage.

f. All funds generated through the solicitation of donations or grants, stocks, gifts, or gifts in kind shall be managed according to current regulations, laws, or IRS requirements related to such gifts.

g. The school shall have policies in place for its budgeting process, including the development of a contingency fund, issues of conflict of interest, delinquent accounts collection, tuition remission, financial aid, scholarships, all fundraising efforts, and endowment fund investment philosophy and spending policies. All financial policies and procedures should be documented in the Administrative Handbook or Business Manual.

h. The board shall create long-range financial projections based on items in the strategic plans that have potential financial impact.

i. The school shall identify any ongoing deficit or long-term debt and shall have a plan for addressing these obligations, including appropriate loan documentation, if applicable.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 All schools will create safe and healthy environments in which students will grow and thrive.

a. There shall be clearly written health policy to include:

Cleaning and sanitizing instructions, medication administrative plan and safe storage for medications, medical emergency plan, safe food handling, requirements for nutritious snack and meals, Individual Health Plans for children with special needs, napping plan where infants are always placed on their backs to sleep, list of symptoms requiring ill staff and children to stay at home, correct use of non-contact, forehead fever thermometers, communicable disease prevention, management and reporting, health history forms for children and the requirement that accidents, injuries and illnesses occurring at school are to be recorded. *All schools must conform to state statutes on immunization (RCW 28A.210 and WAC 246-105-060) and maintain up-to-date records of immunization for all students. A participant may be exempted from this proof of immunization requirement only by presenting a certificate from a licensed physician to the staff stating that due to the physical condition of the participant one or more specified immunizations would endanger the participant's life or health.*

b. At least one caretaker certified in CPR/First Aid to be present at all times. Certification must be current and appropriate for the age group under supervision of the caretaker.

c. All employees must have Certificate of Immunization Status on file.

d. All employees are required to take Blood Bourne Pathogen and HIV/ AIDS training. Disposable gloves and *other personal protective equipment including hospital approved masks, infra-red thermometers, and other safety equipment, are to be readily available.* Spill kit for body fluids is to be on site.

d. Safety precautions to be taken include:

Compliance with all local and state regulations on childcare licensing (if required), building, zoning, and fire safety, daily inspection of premise for hazards, evacuation plan and drills, plans for both natural and manmade disasters, *plans for pandemics, including operational plans for functioning under social distancing orders*, emergency contacts for each child, procedure to allow only authorized persons to take child from school, emergency food and shelter supplies on hand, pesticide application policy, safe chemical storage, playground meets national safety requirements for the age of the youngest child using the equipment, fenced outdoor play areas and indoor room temperature maintained between 68 and 82 degrees Fahrenheit. Additional safety precautions not listed here are to be taken whenever reasonably necessary to protect students and staff from harm.

e. All school employees are state-mandated reporters of child abuse as are all employees and volunteers in the parish or mission. Suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to 1-800-562-5624, to local authorities and to the diocese.

7. Facilities

7.1 The school shall maintain facilities that are conducive to education, and that meet applicable health, fire, building, and childcare licensing codes of the city, county and state in which the school is located.

a. Essential elements of the school facility are: an inviting entryway; health giving resources of sunlight and proper air circulation; a place where students, families and staff can meet as a community; adequate space for students and staff to move about the room and to delve into their studies; a nurturing and supportive environment for staff; proper storage to accommodate classroom organization, and aesthetically pleasing/calming;

controlled and secured entrances and/or exits for the safety of staff and students; and the means to maintain a safe, healthy, and clean environment.

b. The school shall oversee the security of the facility.

c. The school shall receive daily cleaning and maintenance for the health and well-being of the students. There shall be adequate janitorial support and maintenance for repairs done in a timely manner. The school’s campus shall be well maintained and inviting.

8. Programs

8.1 *The school has a written curriculum, taught through developmentally appropriate instruction that reflects the school’s stated mission, purposes, and educational goals.*

8.1A. Early childhood centers and preschools through Pre-K (regulated by the WA Department of Early Learning, <http://del.wa.gov>).

a. The early childhood program philosophy of students as active, multidimensional learners is fostered through concrete, manipulative, multi-sensory and age appropriate materials, interest centers, and learning experiences.

b. The curriculum addresses at least five domains of learning: Physical Well-Being, Health and Motor Development, Social/Emotional; Cognitive and General Knowledge; and Language, Communication and Literacy.

c. Play is valued as an avenue for learning and is included in the daily schedule, creating time for social interaction, creative activities, and appropriate uses of language. The school provides safe indoor and outdoor space for play and recreation.

d. Teachers encourage physical development of children by providing materials, space and time for large and small muscle activities such as dancing, moving games, and finger-plays.

e. Teachers provide learning experiences that stimulate the children to explore, experiment, ask questions, discover, and problem solve.

f. The curriculum encourages the development of good health, nutritional and safety practices for the children.

g. Group size and staff-child ratios must adhere to the following formulas. When children from multiple age groups are present, staffing formulas must meet that of the youngest child present. No care can be provided to children under the age of one (1) month.

Age	Maximum Group Size	Staff: Child Ratio
1-11 mo.	08	1:4
12-29 mo.	14	1:7
30 mo. – 5 yrs.	20	1:10
K-	30	1:15

8.1.B K-12 Programs

a. The program shall include a reasonable balance of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, foreign language, physical education, computer science, religious studies, and community service. The school’s curriculum shall define essential objectives for these and all courses of study.

b. The school's curriculum shall reflect cognizance of the requirements for education as set forth by the state in which it is located. The Washington Office of Public Instruction on its website: www.standards.ospi.k12.wa.us lists standards and related resources for current fields of study taught in public schools. The school should be prepared to show cause why those that are not included in the curriculum are not applicable to the school.

c. Schools that identify students with significant learning differences shall include faculty training, clearly defined referral process, consultation with any resource staff assisting students, and reasonable modifications as necessary, to guide the students to a successful experience in school.

d. The school shall have systems in place to assist new students to integrate successfully into the school’s academic program.

e. The school shall provide adequate library resources for the faculty and students, with reasonable time allotments for their use and with applicable curriculum and acceptable use policies in place.

f. The school shall provide adequate technology resources for the faculty, students, and administration with reasonable time allotments for their use and with applicable training, curriculum, and acceptable use policies in place.

k. The program shall include both instructional elements which address conservation efforts for our world and evidence of a school culture that models environmental stewardship in day to day activities and operations.

- l. The school with a physical education and/or sports program shall have an appropriate number of qualified faculty and staff trained to deal with medical emergencies. All schools shall have staff trained for CPR and minor injuries.
- m. The school shall determine the relevance of program enhancements, such as field trips and travel, and insure that these are planned with the safety of children and adults as a priority.
- n. If the school offers any special programs (summer programs, before or after school programs, sports, tutorials, etc.), these shall be compatible with the school’s purpose or mission.
- o. The school shall publish developmentally appropriate behavioral expectations, its plans for corrective action that include communication with parents, consequences for misbehavior, and policies for addressing serious misconduct. The school shall publish policies related to conduct after school hours, if applicable.
- p. Any e-learning/online courses offered by a school must be accredited by a recognized online accrediting agency and/or developed by the school.
- q. The school’s program, practices, and culture reflect a global perspective, and help students develop open-mindedness, particularly regarding the values and traditions of others.
- r. The school encourages adaptability, initiative, and risk-taking in the exploration of new roles, ideas, and strategies.
- s. The school fosters integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect as necessary components of ethical decision-making.

8.2 The program structure shall provide all organizational basics essential to the successful operation of the school.

- a. The school day and year shall be sufficient for the total school program and in compliance with the laws of the state.
- b. The daily schedule shall provide adequate blocks of instructional and learning time, balanced against non-academic and transitional requirements. Teachers shall have adequate planning and preparation time.

c. The school shall maintain, or have available for its use, physical facilities and plant adequate to support the program. This should include adequate storage for classroom and outdoor equipment, and safe placement for materials such as chemicals used in science or art for which specific safety guidelines are required. Textbooks and essential instructional resource material shall be reasonably current, accurate, and of high quality.

d. There shall be a sufficient number of students, faculty and staff for the stated mission and purpose of the school, and class ratios shall be in compliance with sound educational practice and The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia School Standards.

e. The school shall create general policies for addressing potential extended closures due to natural disasters, major facility emergencies, or other exceptional interruptions of instruction. The policies should address attendance, alternative or resumption of instruction, obligations to employees, and communications with constituents.

8.3 Program content, student placement, and instructional variations shall be considered in the design of programs for different ages.

8.3A Preschools through Pre-K

a. An early childhood program shall include activities balanced between child- and teacher-directed, active/quiet, large group/small group, indoor/outdoor learning activities, and rest-time or naps where required.

b. The program has a written regular schedule of activities that is available to parents. Parental permission is required and additional adult supervision provided for educational experiences away from the school to supplement student learning, such as field trips.

c. The scope and sequence of the program (unit/topic themes, special events, learning outcomes, and time frame) are written, reviewed annually, and available to parents.

d. The school communicates regularly with parents about school policies and procedures and individual student progress through newsletters, written handbooks, open houses, special events, email, a website, parent/teacher conferences or other means.

e. The school shall encourage teachers to recognize the rich variability in maturity and learning styles of young children and use *developmentally responsive practices* with those children who exhibit individual differences from the group.

f. Programs shall meet or exceed local and state regulations and licensing requirements, as applicable. RCW 43.215.010 exempts from day care licensure “nursery schools or

kindergartens that are engaged primarily in educational work with preschool children and in which no child is enrolled on a regular basis for more than four hours per day.”

8.3B. Elementary School Programs

- a. There shall be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and sound educational practice.
- b. There shall be adequate play/recreation space for elementary children and a daily schedule of recess.
- c. Assessment methods of student progress may reflect developmental variances by grade level. Diagnostic testing for learning differences shall be limited to trained professionals and assessment results used for placement or diagnostic purposes shall be kept in the office.

8.3C. Middle School Programs

- a. There will be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and good educational practice.
- b. There shall be adequate advisory and/or counseling programs for student needs.
- c. There shall be placement counseling for graduating students and their families at the terminal grade of the school.
- d. There shall be a variety of extracurricular activities that promote student leadership, talents, and interests.
- e. The middle school shall develop activities, events, or traditions which contribute to its identity and encourage student cohesiveness.

8.3D. High School Programs

- a. There will be a balance of daily academic work and homework that reflects the academic goals of the school and good educational practice.
- b. The school shall publish its graduation requirements, including non-academic obligations such as service work.
- c. There shall be adequate advisory and counseling programs for students.
- d. There shall be placement counseling for graduating students and their families.

e. There shall be a variety of extracurricular activities that promote student leadership, talents, and interests.

f. The school shall develop activities, events, or traditions which contribute to its identity and encourage student cohesiveness.

8.3E. Boarding School Programs

a. Residential life shall be designed to be consistent with the school’s philosophy, mission, and goals, and its policies and procedures are clearly defined.

b. The school shall provide adequate dormitory facilities and supervision.

c. Appropriate evening, weekend, and vacation activities shall be offered.

d. Residential staff shall be qualified to meet the needs of students under their supervision.

8.3F Other School-Related Programs (Mothers’ Day Out, Tutorials, etc.)

a. Other programs that involve children not enrolled in the programs listed above shall meet the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia Standards.

9. Assessment

9.1. The school shall have a written assessment plan of the educational program, indicating how and when student growth in curricular areas is measured and communicated to parents, using developmentally appropriate formative and summative assessments.

a. Systems to benchmark student learning reflect the mission and purposes of the school.

b. Screening tests are always linked with follow-up, and the results communicated to parents and other stakeholders.

c. Assessments using multiple sources of evidence gathered over time are used to understand and improve student learning.

d. Individual student learning is regularly assessed using both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments such as teacher observation, work samples, classroom-based assessments, and self-assessments are tools by which the teacher, student, and parents monitor student development in all domains of learning.

e. Developmentally appropriate summative assessments, such as unit tests, culminating projects, proficiency exams, or state end-of-course assessments for high school students that measure student performance against expected student outcomes, are analyzed to determine necessary adjustments to curriculum and instruction.

9.2 The written assessment plan also provides evidence that the school engages annually in review and assessment of all persons and elements key to the operation of the school, such as scheduling, staffing, use of facilities, finances, and administrative policies.

a. The performance of the Head of School, all teachers and staff, are reviewed at least annually according to pre-established criteria.

b. Student and personnel records are securely stored, and appropriately accessed and confidentially retained.

PART III Policy Options Regarding Standard Two – Episcopal Character

Policy Option A

This option would require that all Episcopal parishes and missions that operate a school, or support a school, or rent to a school would be required to submit a full response to all nine standards. In addition, any independent school that claims Episcopal affiliation would be required to submit a full response to all nine standards. There are diocesan parishes or missions that rent space to educational organizations that are secular or not Episcopal in nature. Selecting Policy Option A could result in these schools possibly being forced to leave church property if the school declined to align its program with the elements of Standard Two. If, for example, a parish rented space to a Head Start program, adopting Policy Option A could create a situation wherein the program could not rent from the parish or mission and meet federal regulations. In the case of a parish that nominally supports a school that has become non-Episcopal, for whatever reason, Policy Option A would also create a dilemma as the parish would be required to make the school meet Standard Two. Lastly, since rental agreements, as described by current diocesan policy, make no required mention of meeting any standards of this nature (current diocesan policy limits rental of church property to organizations that are non-profit under Washington law and engage only in eleemosynary activities,⁵), adopting Policy Option A would require re-negotiating all rental agreements between parishes/missions and their school tenants.

⁵ Eleemosynary activities are charitable in nature and scope. The word derives from the Latin for “alms.”

Policy Option B

Policy Option B would require that all parishes and missions that directly operate schools that are intentionally Episcopal in character meet all nine standards. Schools that are not intentionally Episcopal in character would meet all standards except Standard Two. In Policy Option B, the focus of our standards would be on non-religious elements unless the school elected to be intentionally Episcopal. This would allow secular or non-Episcopal schools to operate on church property or be supported by Episcopal parishes or missions. It would, in effect, place the Diocese of Olympia in the position of requiring that all parishes or missions that operate or support or rent to schools insist upon high standards for the educational and organizational aspects of schools but not on the religious character of those schools. Lastly, since rental agreements, as described by current diocesan policy, make no required mention of meeting any standards of this nature (current diocesan policy limits rental of church property to organizations that are non-profit under Washington law and engage only in eleemosynary activities), adopting Policy Option B also would require re-negotiating all rental agreements between parishes/missions and their school tenants.

Policy Option C

Policy Option C would require that only schools that are operated by or supported by Episcopal parishes and missions would be required to meet diocesan standards. Schools that rent space from Episcopal parishes and missions would not be required to meet diocesan standards. Such schools could not claim any overt relationship to the Episcopal Church or its parishes or missions in any documents other than being a tenant of that parish or mission. If Policy Option C is chosen, the working group recommends that the diocesan policy on renting church property be amended to add a condition to any rental of church property, said new condition to be that “no activity may be permitted by a tenant of an Episcopal parish or mission that is detrimental to the beliefs and reputation of the Episcopal Church.” Moreover, if a parish or mission rents space to a school, the parish or mission must file a document with the diocese that states that the parish or mission has reviewed the mission and goals of the proposed tenant and believes that the proposed activities of the tenant are compatible with the beliefs of the Episcopal Church and are not inimical to the reputation of the Episcopal Church.

PART IV Initial and On-Going Certification Process

Upon adoption by the relevant authority of the Diocese of Olympia, depending on the final policy options selected for Standard Two, all organizations that fall under the jurisdiction of these standards will be sent a copy of the standards along with a time-line for submission of certification documents by those organizations.

In accordance with the published time-line, all organizations will be required to submit to the Diocese of Olympia written documents demonstrating that the organization currently meets all standards as required. The documents must include a narrative reporting of how the organization meets or exceeds the standards and may include relevant documents as evidence of meeting the standard. Such evidence may also include statements regarding documents maintained by the institution, references to organizational websites, or other lines of evidence as elected by the institution.

Day care centers operated by or that rent space from a parish or mission must submit evidence that the center meets all state regulations and requirements for day care centers. (See <http://www.del.wa.gov> for these requirements). In addition, documents must be submitted as evidence that the center meets all diocesan standards that are not part of state licensing and regulation.

If a school is independent of any parish or mission⁶ and wishes to retain its right to be an Episcopal School, it must meet diocesan standards. If the school is otherwise accredited by a national or regional accrediting body, the school may submit its accreditation documents as part of its response to the requirement for diocesan certification.

All parishes or missions that operate or rent space to a school not otherwise accredited or licensed by the state or by a recognized accrediting body must submit a full response to all diocesan standards.⁷

Organizations that wish to propose alternative means of addressing the standards may do so in the body of their document. To be accepted as an alternative or experimental or innovative response to the standards, the organization must provide sufficient evidence that the intent of the standard is met or exceeded.

The documents will be read and reviewed by a panel selected by the Diocese.

⁶ The school owns its own property, is a legally separate entity, has an independent governance structure, separate income and expenditure process, but operates as an Episcopal school.

⁷ This requirement may change depending on the option chosen for Standard Two.

The panel will be composed at least five members, selected by the Bishop or Bishop’s designee. Members of the panel will be chosen from both lay and ordained individuals who have expertise in the field of elementary or secondary education. At least one member of the panel must be a rector or vicar of a mission or parish that operates a day care center, pre-school, or school. One member of the panel must be a current school employee. Panel members will be appointed for three year terms with an option to renew at the discretion of the Bishop.

Clarification questions may be sent to the organization by the review panel before it makes its determination.

The panel will make one of the following determinations:

The organization is deemed to have met all the standards and is certified.

The organization is deemed to have met most of the standards and is certified pending receipt of requested clarifications.

The organization is deemed not to have met the standards and is requested to re-submit its certification documents. That determination by the review panel will require the panel to make specific recommendations to the organization to guide its re-submission.

All organizations certified as having met the standards will be given certification for a period of five (5) years.

Organizations that do not meet the standards may be required to have a site visit by a team selected by the review panel of the Diocese.

Organizations initially certified for the five year period will be required to submit substantive change documents to the review panel detailing any significant changes in the organization since the original certification process. The substantive change document is tied to the nine standards and organizations must report significant changes to any or all of the nine standards, as appropriate.

Complaints received by the Diocese of Olympia or the review panel for educational standards will be reviewed by the panel and it may determine that a review is called for regardless of where the organization is in its certification cycle. Said review may include document reviews or a site visit by a member or members of the diocesan review panel.

If an institution is found to be out of compliance with a standard and is unable to rectify its non-compliance in a reasonable time-frame, the review panel may recommend de-certification of the organization to the Bishop of Olympia. In case of a de-certification, the school must cease and desist any connections with the Episcopal Church and may lose its lease on or lose permission to use any church-owned property.

The review panel will undertake a study of its adopted standards every five years and may make modifications to its standards based on that review.

PART V Adoption of Standards Process

The School Standards work group will submit its report to the Bishop of Olympia no later than September 1, 2011.

Upon adoption of these standards and the accompanying process for implementation, all affected organizations will receive a written copy of the standards no later than one month following the adoption of the standards.

Stakeholder meetings will be held in at least two locations within the Diocese to help organizations understand their obligations under these standards following their adoption by the Diocese. Additional information will be made available through the diocesan website and members of the initial work group may provide consultant services to the affected organizations.

Twelve (12) months following the adoption of the standards, all affected organizations will submit documents to the review panel.

Six (6) months following the submission of the documents, the review panel will issue its findings to those organizations that have submitted complete documents. The panel will also notify those organizations that have not submitted any documents or incomplete documents and give them a timeline for submission.

The review panel will publish its findings in the appropriate diocesan venues.

The review panel will make periodic reports to the Bishop and appropriate diocesan bodies in its first year of existence and make annual reports thereafter.

PART VI Comments Received from “Stakeholders”

(This section of the report was not edited. Comments are printed as they were received.)

From The Rev. Jim Eichner, Rector, Church of the Holy Cross, Redmond⁸

Thoughts on implications of school standards.

Wherever there is crossover with the State / Fed regulations, eliminate from the policy. Remove redundancy.

Episcopal and Secular are two words I set as opposites. Neither is a very clear concept.

Other words are missing or scarce: Christian, Discipleship, Faith Formation, Spiritual Formation and Outreach.

The preschool is the principal outreach ministry of Holy Cross for the last couple of decades. We define outreach as benevolent ministry directed outside of the parish with limited parish self-interest.

At this point in development of the policy, Holy Cross might subscribe to a modified version of Policy Option B. If option A became policy, it would change the charter of Best Beginnings preschool to such a degree that we would shut down our preschool in order to reinvent it. This would be a big change.

We have discussed at length, among school and vestry, making Best Beginnings a “Christian preschool” Right now it is a rainbow of diversity. People of all faiths and ethnicities. Some chose us over their sectarian school options. I’d rather have people who would otherwise have nothing to do the Church, on the campus, in the buildings, bumping into parishioners. Every year 2-3 families enter the fellowship of Holy Cross through this easy side door.

My anecdotal experience with as Chaplain to St. Mary’s where we had chapel every week, is that there is little difference in crossover rate. Make it a Christian school and the school population of Christians goes up. However, most of them go to their own church somewhere other than the hosting school. The unchurched and people of other faith traditions will not attend.

⁸ Church of the Holy Cross, Redmond owns and operates “Best Beginnings Pre-School” which enrolls 180 students and has 16 staff. It currently offers no religious instruction.

If these standards are being writ large in order to correct something amiss in a *certain school*, it seems more effective to simply approach that one institution and open the dialog. It is fair for the schools to ask this committee, what qualifies you to alter the design and intention of curricula.

Regulations, evaluations, reports and trainings require administrative time, teacher time. Time in schools costs money. Teachers don't show up for in-service training for free. Principals have a budget and an agenda for continuing education. In general, regulations are an administrative burden that costs money and hurts smaller institutions, rather than encouraging them.

Requiring 101 level training for teachers already operating on a 600 level of experience, accountability, and education is frankly, an insult to their professionalism.

Looking at desired outcomes of safety and quality of education: In general, the integrity and character of your staff that matter more than regulations, for these outcomes. The intangibles of quality education, faith formation, safety, and character development are the result of good people in the position. People learn from people not from curriculum.

In general congregations function best when given discretion to discern the will of God and the application of the Gospel in their own mission context. Policies that neglect these missional microclimates are counterproductive to the mission of the local church.

Appendix A

Bishop’s Task Force on Episcopal School Standards

The Rev. Dr. Dennis S. Tierney, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church

The Rt. Rev. Craig B. Anderson, Ph.D., Emmanuel Episcopal Church

The Rev. Dr. Corbet Clark, Chaplain, Oregon Episcopal School

Mr. Glen Lutz, Head, St. Mary’s Episcopal School

Ms. Bobbie McCormick, Head, Good Samaritan School

The Rev. Dr. Suzi Robertson, Good Samaritan Episcopal Church

The Rev. Dr. Jane Rohrer, Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross

Ms. Marcella Rush, Good Shepherd Montessori School