

November 2021 Cognia Accreditation 5 Year Visit Summary

A little background

St. Bernadette School embarked on our accreditation journey back in 2017 when Cognia was called “AdvancED.” What we loved about this arduous process and this international company is that an institution doesn't just reach a certain level of excellence and maintain it to be accredited: each 5 year review sets new goals to be reached and proven by the next visit. The members of the SBS School Improvement Committee with the entire staff are excited to celebrate with our students, families and parish community the huge successes of our 5 Year Cognia Accreditation visit and invite you to join us in conquering our newly set goals.

Overall rankings

First, Cognia gave St. Bernadette School an overall score of 309.5 which is over 26 points higher than the top of the average range of all other accredited schools (which is 278.34-283.33). Staff scored our school, based on data and evidence, on each of thirty standards, then the Cognia reviewers rated us on the same thirty, based on a preponderance of supporting evidence, interviews and observations. On all but two of those thirty standards, Cognia ranked us higher than we ranked ourselves, proving our high standards are internally driven. Four were ranked as current improvements to be extended; eighteen were ranked as quality practices that are improving, eight were ranked noteworthy practices with clear positive impact. Not one single standard was ranked insufficient.

“There is an expectation of love.”

The six page narrative by the review team “deliberately chose” the word LOVE and the three pillars of what they termed our “powerful” school mission to describe how all SBS leadership consistently models “purpose and delegation that provides the support and resources” for us to be so effective.

SBS MISSION STATEMENT

I am a disciple of Christ from St. Bernadette.

I will follow God's plan to be the best version of myself

(1)in my learning,

(2)my interactions with others

(3)and my relationship with Jesus.

They were surprised at how much ownership and commitment our entire community has to our mission, especially since the rollout was so recent. They recognized that our "heartfelt belief" in this will lead us to a successful and faith-filled life and will sustain the direction that "embodies the spirit of St. Bernadette."

We are a "family" of "servant leaders."

A criss-crossing network of collaboration and communication has created an undeniable sense of family at SBS. From administration fostering staff in leadership roles, peer evaluations between teachers, partnerships with Gross Catholic and the Bellevue Police Department, within the parish, the Archdiocese and the Omaha Catholic Schools Consortium to our regularly scheduled surveys of parents, students and community members then communicating and acting on them transparently. (See below.) This "trust, respect, support and appreciation" creates this family. Also, the teaching staff has stayed at SBS an average of 20 years!

Data, Data, Data

An improvement priority from our first visit was to implement an effective data analysis protocol. "Serious and deliberate action" is evident in both student achievement results and culture and climate surveys. This information plus class data binders, our "data wall," both summative and formative data are analyzed in our twice monthly Professional Learning Communities and School Improvement Committee meetings. What they found most impressive was how much we acted on these results to make programming and staff changes like expanding the Title I program, hiring a special education teacher, revising the SAT process, accessing counselor

services, addressing Social/ Emotional learning, adding Restorative Practices and reconfiguring staff assignments.

LEI and HFP

SBS's work in both the Latino Enrollment Institute and the Hernandez Fellowship Program through the University of Notre Dame was noteworthy as "highly relevant for meeting current and future needs."

Looking forward

The Cognia evaluating team encouraged us to expand our "sense" of family into one of "measurable impact" by collecting data on volunteer hours, programs and activities. This will be easier to do as the covid restrictions fade, and we look forward to bringing our St. Bernadette community back together.

Other than notable exceptions of our middle school electives programs, robotics and the arts, the Cognia team felt students would benefit from more hands-on projects and collaboration. Again, as we emerge from covid protocols that kept our students separated and in stricter seating arrangements, we look forward to expanding and enriching our student activities.

Even though we only teach through eighth grade, the evaluators felt career exploration opportunities could prove valuable to our students. In closing, we look forward to embarking on the next step of this journey with our entire St. Bernadette community and thank each of you for trusting us with your family, their faith and their future...and for helping us be the best version of ourselves...