



GOALS AND CRITERIA

**SACRED HEART SCHOOLS
UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

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SACRED HEART SCHOOLS UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Society of the Sacred Heart
United States–Canada Province
St. Louis, Missouri

INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction to her booklet on *The Society of the Sacred Heart*, Mother Janet Erskine Stuart observes:

It is not easy to write of things that are actually in being, between a past that is only beginning to lengthen into distances and a future that is still unknown. Events move quickly, and living things modify themselves even more while they move.¹

While written in 1913, these words aptly describe the context of this fourth edition of *Goals and Criteria* for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States and Canada Province. With our work on the revisioning process seriously begun in November 2018, no one could have anticipated the abrupt turn-of-events that quickly led to unprecedented disruption, disorientation and liminality on our course to their completion. Halted by a global pandemic, social unrest related to racial injustice, devastating wildfires, and the violent winds and waters of hurricanes, our corporate reflection process paused —as though “in waiting” — between a past and an unknown future to complete our work.

Authenticity in such ontological moments requires presence and attention. It demands fidelity. It invites surrender to a higher process at work within the circumstances. It means remaining open to the unfolding revelation of God.

¹ Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ. *Society of the Sacred Heart*, Convent, Roehampton 1914, Introduction p. 6.

As though “finding us” as educators, this articulation of our *Goals and Criteria* emerges at a transformational moment in our history—a moment being driven by the evolution of the planet, breakthrough science, the emergence of new technologies, artificial intelligence, educational and social innovation, and human development. These powerful macro factors at work in our world presented us with an ideal moment for exploring at depth our core beliefs and values, educational philosophy and pedagogy, culture and climate within Sacred Heart schools.

In our consultation with the Religious of the Sacred Heart, Boards of Trustees, faculties and staff of 24 schools in the Network of Sacred Heart Schools, and other key constituency groups of the United States-Canada Province over a two-year period, the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG) engaged multiple perspectives to create this document. While uncertainty and impermanency characterized our context, these *Goals and Criteria* reflect our confidence in contemplative listening and in the immutable value of collective wisdom.

The effect of these conversations within our respective communities was not expected, and it could not have been predicted. Across the Province, our individual passions and collective energy came forward with a surge of creativity and commitment to this reflection on mission for the future of Sacred Heart education and our students. Such engaged dialogue within and beyond our respective communities deepened our experience of true collaboration and the reality of our co-ownership in a purpose shared as a spiritual call and a vocation.

Our *Goals and Criteria* rest on five Foundational Principles which are non-negotiable constitutive elements for all Sacred Heart Schools. All are essential with no one of them being of greater importance or priority. The same can be observed about the Goals: all are fundamental expressions of the Sacred Heart mission. The five Goals have remained unchanged from the previous version to reflect their timeless values. More than a few of our Criteria have changed to reflect our vision and our hopes for the next 15 years within Sacred Heart school communities. The *Goals and Criteria* while possessing similarity in syntax and style are not formulaic; there is no one way in which to enact progress. They are not prescriptive, but, rather, expressed as aspirations for our educational communities.

Mother Stuart ends her introduction with immense gratitude and a call to action. We wish to do the same.

But at any time in the life of a corporate body that owes a debt of gratitude to God, to the Church and to its first authors, a true picture, though a fleeting one, may be given of it as it stands today; thankful for the past and hopeful for the future, striving in the present to realize the purpose for which it has come into being.²

At the end of our efforts, we recognize these *Goals and Criteria* as incomplete and unfinished; perhaps signaling that the living of a mission as great as ours is never fully complete or fully realized. Given as gift, our mission is a sacred work fulfilled only through the enfolding of it by each generation. This work of mission is greater than this moment, any of us, and all our individual and collective efforts. The realization of this incontrovertible truth is grace.

² Ibid.

Aware that the irrepressible urge to “discover and to make known the love of the heart of Jesus” will always lay claim to our story, and with an incomprehensible love that never ceases to humble us, we entrust these *Goals and Criteria* to each member of our Sacred Heart school communities in faith and with joy.

To the Heart of Mary, our Mater Admirabilis, radiant with the qualities of interiority and quietude that have been so essential during these months of prayer, patient waiting and reflection, we entrust this work of glorifying the Heart of her son, Jesus. May she lead us.

2020

GOALS AND CRITERIA

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

01

In the *Goals and Criteria*, the Society of the Sacred Heart defines the mission of the school as part of the Society's educational mission in the Catholic Church.

02

Each school is accountable to the Society of the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals for its adherence to the *Goals and Criteria*.

03

Each school's Board of Trustees and Administration establish and uphold policies that are consistent with the *Goals and Criteria*.

04

The school allocates its resources to support each Goal and its Criteria.

05

The school is in compliance with professional standards as stated by accrediting agencies.

GOAL I

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a personal and active faith in God.

01

The school identifies itself to the wider community as a Catholic-independent-Sacred Heart School and embodies the mission of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

02

The school forms its student and adult members in attitudes of the heart of Jesus, such as gratitude, generosity, compassion and forgiveness.

03

The school community reflects an ethos of joy, hope and celebration and its programs assert that there is meaning and value in life.

04

The school community welcomes and respects persons of all faiths and educates to an understanding of the religions and spiritual traditions of the world.

05

School leadership prioritizes space and time for silence and contemplation for its members to deepen their interior life.

06

Members of the school community, open to the transforming power of the Spirit of God, engage in personal and communal prayer, discernment and reflection which inform their actions.

07

The school community, rooted in the love of Jesus Christ, nurtures the spiritual lives of its members through the exploration of one's relationship to God, to self, to others and to creation.

GOAL II

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.

- 01 Sacred Heart educators and students engage in challenging experiences that inspire intellectual curiosity, a global mindset and a life-long love of learning.
- 02 Sacred Heart educators develop and implement a dynamic curriculum, effective instructional methodology, current educational research and ongoing evaluation.
- 03 Sacred Heart educators and students utilize a variety of teaching and learning strategies to support their growth and development.
- 04 The school curricular and co-curricular programs integrate innovation and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, the exploration of emerging technologies and critical evaluation of information.
- 05 The school utilizes space and the physical environment in alignment with best pedagogical practices.
- 06 The school cultivates aesthetic values and the creative use of the imagination.
- 07 Sacred Heart educators assume responsibility for their professional growth, supported by resources and a culture that promotes life-long learning.

GOAL III

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a social awareness which impels to action.

- 01 Sacred Heart educators prepare students to serve the common good in an interdependent world.
- 02 Sacred Heart educators immerse students in diverse global perspectives, developing competencies such as critical consciousness, language facility and cultural literacy.
- 03 The school, drawing from Catholic Social Teaching, educates students to analyze and work to eradicate social structures, practices, systems and values that perpetuate racism and other injustices.
- 04 All members of the school community accept accountability for the care of God's creation, practice effective stewardship of the earth's resources and work to alleviate the climate crisis.
- 05 School programs promote informed active citizenship and civic responsibility on the local, national and global level.
- 06 The school community engages in direct service, advocacy, outreach and partnerships to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
- 07 Sacred Heart educators work to develop in the students a life-long commitment to service.

GOAL IV

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to the building of community as a Christian value.

- 01** The school, affirming that all are created in the image and likeness of God, promotes the inherent dignity of the human person and strives for relationships characterized by inclusion and mutual respect.
- 02** The school implements an ongoing plan for educating all members of the community to the charism, mission and heritage of the Society of the Sacred Heart.
- 03** The school engages with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools in the United States and Canada and Sacred Heart schools around the world.
- 04** All members of the school community support a clean, healthy and safe environment.
- 05** Members of the school community practice and teach with a spirit of peace and reconciliation the principles of non-violence and conflict management.
- 06** School leadership demonstrates a conscious effort to recruit students and employ faculty and staff of diverse races, ethnicities and backgrounds.
- 07** School leadership allocates financial resources to support socio-economic diversity both in the admissions process and in the daily life of students.

GOAL V

Schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.

01

Student and adult members of the school community grow in courage and confidence as they discover new abilities, cultivate strengths, learn from mistakes, develop empathy and exercise resilience in meeting challenges.

02

All members of the school community take personal responsibility for health and balance in their lives supported by a school culture that promotes spiritual, intellectual, physical and social-emotional well-being.

03

Members of the school community model and teach respectful dialogue in support of clear, direct, open communication.

04

All members of the school community endeavor to practice informed, ethical decision-making and accountability.

05

Student and adult members of the school community model, practice, and teach safe, ethical and responsible use of technology.

06

Sacred Heart educators cultivate in the students life skills, such as initiative, creativity and agility.

07

Sacred Heart schools recognize and educate to motivational, inspirational, and transformational leadership.

APPENDIX

Preamble to the 1975 *Goals and Criteria*

Introduction to the 1990 *Goals and Criteria*

Introduction to the 2005 *Goals and Criteria*

PREAMBLE

to the 1975 Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States

The schools of the Sacred Heart in the United States, members of a world-wide network, offer an education that is marked by a distinctive spirit. It is of the essence of a Sacred Heart school that it be deeply concerned for each student's total development: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical. It is of the essence of a Sacred Heart school that it emphasize serious study, that it educate to social responsibility, and that it lay the foundations of a strong faith.

Many educators, especially Christian educators, will find much that they can identify with in the stated purposes of Sacred Heart schools. Given the vast needs of the world, of the Church in the United States, of children and their parents, it should be cause for rejoicing that this is so - that many seek to meet these complex challenges in a similar fashion. But what will always be distinctive about the schools of the Sacred Heart is the long tradition from which they come. This tradition, which has permeated the training of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, is familiar to the Religious who teach in the schools, but perhaps less familiar to the lay colleagues who work so closely with them. It has been experientially familiar to generations of Sacred Heart students who, as alumnae, send their children to receive the education they themselves valued so highly.

For the Religious of the Sacred Heart, education has always been viewed as a mission of the most demanding kind. "The Religious of the Sacred Heart are consecrated by their vocation to education."¹

¹ 1815 *Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart*, par. 202.

Members of the Society drew up the first *Plan of Studies* in 1805, five years after their own founding, and reformulated it ten times over the next 150 years. Sacred Heart schools first held to a single uniform curriculum, but in 1958 a document significantly entitled *Spirit and Plan of Studies* “deliberately puts aside all details of syllabus” noting that “these are bound to vary according to time and place,” and tries to “give a clear idea of a *spirit*... which will hold good for every work of education”² that the Society might undertake.

If one seeks the timeless element in Sacred Heart education, one must look to that spirit, for externals and customs were always seen as subject to change. Timelessness has never meant rigid adherence to a single program or method. Revision of curriculum was always a concern of the Society’s General Congregations, which had the highest decision-making authority in the Order.

Whatever (the orientation given to studies) may be, there must be no forgetting that it means the formation of the whole woman with a view to her own vocation in the circumstances and the age in which she has to live.³

The present paper resembles others in which, since 1967, the Society of the Sacred Heart has defined itself and its mission in the contemporary Church. Like these, it does not pretend to say the last word on its subject. Like these, it draws upon the texts of the Second Vatican Council, for it is in the Sacred Heart tradition to be deeply loyal to the Church, and to respond swiftly to the challenges and opportunities the Church offers. For this reason, the evolution of the schools of the Sacred Heart makes little sense if viewed outside of the context of the history of the Catholic Church.

² *Spirit and Plan of Studies*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

In the last ten years the American schools of the Sacred Heart, following the spirit of the Society and of the Church, have adapted their programs and methods to suit the special situation of each school. The decentralization of control which made this possible was embarked upon in full confidence that the presence of Religious of the Sacred Heart alone would (so it was assumed) assure that the essentials of Sacred Heart education would be preserved.

It is never safe, however, to assume too much. Values taken for granted or left unarticulated can become inoperative. Patterns of leadership and governance, the make-up of faculties and student bodies have changed rapidly, and as the schools of the Sacred Heart enter the mainstream of American independent education, they feel its characteristic pressures and strains. As they become increasingly diverse, it becomes increasingly necessary to respond to the question: "What makes a Sacred Heart school?" Independent but never isolated, every Sacred Heart school needs to feel the strength of belonging to a larger whole, of sharing principles and values, broad purposes, hopes and ambitions.

The following pages attempt to delineate what a Sacred Heart school is in the 1970's. They draw upon the Society's basic documents, as well as working papers recently developed by the Heads of Schools. This paper therefore repeats much that will be familiar to Religious of the Sacred Heart and to those close to the Society in recent years.

Five *Goals* are stated, and several *Criteria* are given for each. The first three Goals are taken directly from the section on education in the documents of the Society's 1970 General Chapter. The Criteria are signs which indicate that the Goal is being effectively pursued.

The Goals and Criteria are the *sine qua non* for every school that belongs to the Sacred Heart network. They provide the framework within which each school is to develop specific *Objectives* appropriate to its local situation. Means of evaluation and accountability have also been designed, so that each school, and the network as a whole, may draw maximum benefit from this process.

INTRODUCTION

to the 1990 Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States

The 1975 *Goals and Criteria* articulated the essence of a Sacred Heart school in the United States. For the past fifteen years the commitment to educate to these five goals has defined a Sacred Heart school and has bound it to the other schools in the Network in a common mission. Today, on the edge of the third millennium, many Network colleagues have experienced the need to again refocus and rearticulate our educational priorities.

As we approach the twenty-first century, Sacred Heart schools in the United States “have a new appreciation of their potential to participate in a radical reshaping of society.”¹ This 1990 expression recognizes the perennial institutional issues: tradition and change, continuity and reform, society and the individual. The challenge, however, continues to lie in the five elements that have been the framework of Sacred Heart education since its beginning in 1800. These principles are ageless, but the context for the challenge has changed and this requires from us a fresh response.

The needs of the world and of the United States again set the agenda for our response. Family life is in crisis. Economic inequities separate and divide peoples; the gaps continue to increase. Racist attitudes and structures persist. Both men and women struggle to promote the acceptance of the fundamental equality and complementarity of the sexes. Social questions have worldwide dimensions. Violence, drugs, disease, and the destruction of the environment threaten human life and our planet.

¹ *International Education Commission Working Paper*, p.30.

The 1990 *Goals and Criteria* express the values, the intentions, and the hopes of the Sacred Heart tradition, sharpened to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. They also reflect recent documents of the Society of the Sacred Heart that express the vision of Sacred Heart education and the promise for the future. “The institutions we hope for today are made up of bonds of relationships between groups of various kinds which have a common value system and policies which allow the promotion of these values. Such institutions interact with the world at large and are able to be called into question from within or without in view of changes in the reality which they are to serve. Members are expected to take real responsibility and to be creative.”²

The 1990 revision is the result of a year of work on the part of faculty and administration of the nineteen Network schools and the input of many Religious of the Sacred Heart. The revision is rooted in the past and the present and attests to the future. The 1990 *Goals* challenge us to bring the values of a strong educational tradition to this fragmented world. They will succeed in energizing our mission only in so far as we take bold steps to interpret our local reality and dare to present God’s love as a healing and empowering gift.

² Ibid., p. 31.

INTRODUCTION

to the 2005 Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States

The Preamble of the original edition of the *Goals and Criteria* states that “values taken for granted or left unarticulated become inoperative.”¹ This conviction resulted in capturing the essence of Sacred Heart education in the five goals and their criteria. The *Goals and Criteria* provide both the uniqueness of a Sacred Heart School and the strong bond of union among the Network of Sacred Heart schools. They continue to challenge all Sacred Heart educators to deepen their understanding of these timeless principles. As the Introduction to the 1990 edition says:

The challenge, however, continues to live in the five elements that have been the framework of Sacred Heart education since its beginning in 1800. These principles are ageless, but the context for the challenge has changed and this requires of us a fresh response. ... The needs of the world and of the United States again set the agenda for our response.²

Since that description was written we have crossed the threshold into the third millennium as well as into the third century of Sacred Heart education.

¹ Preamble to *The Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*, approved by the Interprovincial Board, 1975.

² Introduction to *The Goals and Criteria*, approved by the Provincial Team, 1990.

In 2000 the Society of the Sacred Heart held a General Chapter, an international meeting of delegates of its members. Its purpose was to examine the context today for the Society's mission. Through the eyes and experiences of the delegates, the Chapter

...welcomed into our hearts and into our deliberations the faces of peoples across the globe. We have had before us the faces of hope and promise, the young in their generosity, those who are restless for God, women and men who create and reverence life. We have seen the suffering of children without education, of young people searching for meaning, of those suffering from HIV/AIDS, of women abused and discriminated against, of refugees displaced by war, violence and poverty. These faces of people reveal the Heart of God.³

September 11, 2001 forever changed our context. The threat of terrorism in our world, the corporate greed and scandals in our country and a sense of entitlement in its citizens can drain us of hope. At times honesty and integrity in daily life seem to be forgotten virtues. The innovations of technology have connected persons in newer, faster ways, but this instant networking can depersonalize communication. Environmental concerns seem not to get the attention they should be demanding of our governments. Globalization does not always clarify our interdependence; globalization too often brings new burdens for the poor of the world. The Roman Catholic Church finds itself profoundly challenged by internal and external factors. The meaning of faithful membership can sometimes be lost in rhetorical arguments rather than in being firmly rooted in one's relationship with God. The shortage of ordained ministers endangers sacramental life. We recognize we have much to learn about the spiritualities other faith traditions offer.

³ Society of the Sacred Heart *General Chapter 2000* Introduction, (Amiens, France, August 2000) p.14.

During the academic year 2004-2005 the constituencies of the Network Schools and the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) engaged in a spirited consultation. The *2005 Goals and Criteria Document*, crafted by the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG), is the fruit of this consultation. The “foundational principles” contained in this document are non-negotiable elements for being a Sacred Heart school. It is the expectation that these foundational principles be a part of a school community’s reflection when it evaluates its life during the SHCOG process. As with the Criteria, their order in the list does not signify importance; each foundational principle and each criterion is as important as any other one.

The process of refocusing and rearticulating our values as Sacred Heart educators led to many passionate conversations among us. This process of communal reflection has given us renewed appreciation of and commitment to our educational mission and how to live it in today’s world. Janet Erskine Stuart, RSCJ reminds us...

Epochs of transition must keep us on the alert. They ask us to keep our eyes open upon the distant horizons, our minds listening to seize every indication that can enlighten us; reading, reflection, searching, must never stop; the mind must keep flexible in order to lose nothing, to acquire any knowledge that can aid our mission.... Immobility, arrested development bring decadence; a beauty, fully unfolded is ready to perish. So let us not rest on our beautiful past.⁴

Let us accept the invitation to probe the depths of the *Goals and Criteria* that they might be prophetic orientations leading us to hope, a hope that believes in the goodness of each person, a hope that believes in the goodness of humanity, a hope that believes in and trusts the love of the Heart of God.

⁴ Letter to the Society of the Sacred Heart, August 13, 1912, in Margaret Williams, RSCJ, *The Society of the Sacred Heart* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978) 158.



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