

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.4: *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

The mission statement stands at the core of a school's reason for existing, and as such, is an organizational tool, an educational tool, and a tool for public relations and branding. The mission statement should proclaim to the public and to the school's constituencies what the schools seeks to accomplish. For this reason it should be prominently displayed in both verbal and symbolic ways within the school building, on advertisements, and on all school communications. This includes electronic forms of communication.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do the school's publications, web pages, and social media interactions reflect verbal as well as symbolic expressions of the mission and the manner in which it infuses all that the school undertakes?
- Do the school's discipline policies and handbooks reflect the mission statement?
- How is the mission statement displayed? Is it a permanent or transitional display?
- How does the mission statement tie together the visible aspects of the school?

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III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationary, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationery, web sites, social media, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school, and is easily accessed online and through its physical presence throughout the school building. For the public it is closely associated with the school as an institutional presence. The school has integrated a symbolic sense of the mission statement into its physical structure and advertising.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the mission statement is displayed within the building and on school documents on a limited basis. It must be searched for on the web site, and is not easily associated with the school.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the mission statement is virtually unknown to the public and/or school community.

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IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Post and publish the mission statement within the school and on school documents.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Make the mission statement a greater presence throughout the school and on documents.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Make the mission statement an essential part of the school's "brand."
- Represent the mission statement through the physical structure of the school in either a full or reduced form.
- Represent the mission statement on physical documents and publications as well as virtual portals to the school.

V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)