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The Four-Year Cycle at a Glance

The Mission Integration Planning & Contact Cycle plays a vital role in the collaborative relationship the Marianist Province has with its sponsored schools and retreat centers. This process serves as leaven to sustain the Catholic and Marianist mission and identity of the sponsored ministry. The four-year Mission Integration Planning & Contact Cycle builds on itself and helps these ministries achieve their Mission Integration goals.

Year 1: Plan Development

The objective of Year 1 is to develop and begin to implement a new Mission Integration Plan. It is a collaborative effort of the sponsored ministry's community and engages the support and feedback of the Office of Sponsorship. This culminates in a teleconference with the Office of Sponsorship, the leadership of the sponsored ministry, and the chair of the Mission Integration Team to review the Mission Integration Plan submitted by the ministry.

Year 2: Visitation and Review

Year 2 includes a visitation by a representative of the Office of Sponsorship to monitor the ministry's progress in implementing its Mission Integration Plan. The visitation also includes a review of the ministry's ongoing relationship with the Province and a discussion of ways the ministry and the Province can strengthen their collaborative relationship and partnership in mission. This discussion takes into consideration the different requirements of the *Sponsorship & Services Agreement*, including the Mission Integration Plan. During this visit the Office of Sponsorship representative meets with various members of the sponsored ministry's community to obtain their input. The results of these visits are documented and shared with the leadership of the ministry.

Year 3: Progress Update

The objective of Year 3 is to review progress in implementing the Mission Integration Plan. The chair of the Mission Integration Team and the leadership of the sponsored ministry meet via teleconference with the Office of Sponsorship to demonstrate evidence of progress made with the plan.

Year 4: Visitation and Evaluation

Year 4 includes a visitation and evaluation by a team selected by the Office of Sponsorship from other Marianist-sponsored ministries. Similar to the Year 2 visitation,

the visiting team meets with various members of the sponsored ministry's community to evaluate progress made in implementing the Mission Integration Plan and to suggest areas of focus in developing the next four-year Mission Integration Plan. The results of these visits are documented and shared with the leadership of the sponsored ministry and evaluated by the Office of Sponsorship.

Year 1: Plan Development	Year 2: Visitation and Review	Year 3: Progress Update	Year 4: Visitation and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Development of a new four-year Mission Integration Plan•Review of Plan with the Office of Sponsorship•Implementation of Year 1 Action Items•Development of Year 2 Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Implementation of Year 2 Action Items•Visitation by Office of Sponsorship•Development of Year 3 Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Implementation of Year 3 Action Items•Teleconference with Office of Sponsorship•Development of Year 4 Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Implementation of Year 4 Action Items•Visitation and Evaluation by Peer Review Team•Review of Visitation and Evaluation by Office of Sponsorship

Visiting Teams: Overview of the Process

You have agreed to be part of a Mission Integration Visiting Team. We in the Office of Sponsorship of the Marianist Province of the U.S. appreciate your willingness to serve the ministry of education in our Marianist-sponsored schools in this important capacity.

This document is designed to provide some background about the role of Team Visits in the overall Mission Integration process. Other documents in this series explain in greater detail your particular role on the Visiting Team, and what you might expect from your experience.

The Process in Context

The idea of having teams of practitioners visit schools for purposes of accountability has a long history. Most school accrediting organizations include such a team visit periodically as part of the accreditation process. The schools of the Marianist province of the U.S., formerly under the auspices of the Office of Education and now under those of the Office of Sponsorship, have been regularly visited by teams of Marianist educators since the formation of the province. The purpose of the visits has been the validation and affirmation of the efforts of the schools to embody the Characteristics of Marianist Education (CME).

Beginning with the 2009 - 2010 academic year, the Office of Education adapted the ways we interact with our sponsored schools to better address their current Mission Integration needs. This new Mission Integration process continues now under the Office of Sponsorship.

The process includes a four-year cycle of activity. The cycle begins with the development of a four-year plan by school's Mission Integration Team (MIT) during the first year, continues with teleconferences and an individual visit by a member of the Office of Sponsorship, and culminates in a Team Visit in the fourth year.

You will be visiting a school that has been preparing for your visit for four years. The better you understand the intent of the overall process and the way it is implemented, the better able you will be to participate in helping the ministry to improve the quality of Marianist Education it delivers.

Long-range Planning

The first year of the Mission Integration cycle begins with the MIT of the school developing a four-year plan. In contrast to the way planning had been done in the past, the MIT is expected to spend a significant amount of time assessing the needs of the school community. This assessment provides the foundation for a plan designed to move the school toward a fuller expression of Marianist Education. Rather than being limited to short range activities, the focus of the plan is on reaching significant extended goals, which may include a series of events or programs that extend beyond one year. Throughout the four-year cycle, a school should be improving its understanding and deliver of Marianist Education. By the end of the four-year cycle, the school should be able to cite significant progress in delivering Marianist Education.

When completed, the plan is submitted to the Office of Sponsorship for review. The Office of Sponsorship, the MIT Chair, and the chief administrators of the school then communicate via a conference call to discuss the plan.

It is important for the Office of Sponsorship to understand the plan and its rationale, both to be able to effectively support the school in reaching its goals and to fairly assess whether those goals have been attained.

Progress of the Plan

As the MIT works with the school community toward its goals, the Office of Sponsorship is in regular communication with the school to offer feedback and support. During Year Two of the Mission Integration cycle, a member of the Office of Sponsorship visits the school. This visit serves as a mid-point review of plan progress. The visitor meets with the MIT and administrators so that all parties share an understanding of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

During Year Three of the cycle, there is again a conference call between the Office of Sponsorship, the MIT Chair, and the chief administrators of the school to assess progress. These contacts will serve as formative evaluation, guiding the MIT toward successful completion of the plan.

End of the Cycle: Looking to the Future

During Year Four of the Mission Integration cycle, the MIT continues to work toward the goals outlined in the plan. It also begins to assess its success in completing the plan and notes areas in which further growth is needed. Throughout the four-year process, the MIT collects evidence of its progress. This evidence is presented during the Team Visit.

As a member of the Visiting Team, you will carefully review this evidence. At the end of your visit, you will work with the Chair of your team in preparing a written Visit Report which will serve as a record of your findings. In that report, you will affirm the school's successes and suggest area for attention during the next four-year cycle.

The Visit Report will be reviewed by the administrators and the MIT of the school and by the Office of Sponsorship. The Office of Sponsorship will write a commentary which will affirm the findings of the Visiting Team and, as necessary, address other issues that may have arisen during the four-year cycle. This commentary will be shared with the school administration and MIT. Once the school administration acknowledges, in writing, the report and commentary, it marks the end of the Mission Integration cycle.

Mission integration is not a project with a defined beginning and end, however. Work on the next cycle will have already begun. In reviewing the successes and shortcomings of the previous plan, the MIT will have begun determining a direction for the next one and the feedback provided by your Team Visit will have further clarified their strengths and needs.

In Summary

The Team Visit plays an important role in the Mission Integration Process in helping the school community reflect on past progress, recognize needs that remain to be met, and begin to focus directions for the future.

In serving on a Visiting Team, you perform a valuable service to your fellow Marianist educators and to Marianist Education. By helping to improve this important ministry, you are sharing directly in Mary's mission of bringing Jesus to life in the world.

Visiting Team: The Team Visit

The Team Visit serves as an opportunity for the visited school to demonstrate how it exemplifies Marianist Education, as a condition of continued sponsorship by the Marianist Province of the U.S. As such, the Team Visit and the reports and conversations emanating from it have an important role in the Province and the school together deciding to continue the sponsorship relationship.

This document outlines what a member of a Visiting Team may expect before, during, and after the visit.

Structure of the Visiting Team

Visiting Teams are comprised of three Marianist educators. All Visiting Teams include at least one experienced member, so, if this is your first, you can be assured that one or both of the other members has done this before. The best way to learn what a Visiting Team is all about is to be part of one along with experienced colleagues.

The scope of a Team Visit makes the presence of all of the visitors important. When you agree to be part of a Visiting Team, you agree to participate in preparation prior to the visit, to be present for the entire visit, and to assist with preparation of the Visit Report. Of course, unavoidable circumstances, such as illness or weather problems do arise. Should something occur to affect your ability to participate, please contact your Visiting Team Chair immediately so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

Before the Visit

The Chair of the Visiting Team will be in contact with people from the school to be visited regarding arrangements for the visit, including dates, a schedule, overnight accommodations, transportation, and other practical matters relating to the visit. The Chair will be in contact with you to ensure the arrangements meet your needs.

All members of the Visiting Team should familiarize themselves with the school prior to the visit. The school's website provides a wealth of general information. You will be provided with additional information, including the current Mission Integration Plan, reports of prior visits, and survey data approximately one month before the scheduled visit. Review these carefully prior to the visit. Any questions you may have about these materials should be raised with your Visiting Team Chair prior to the visit.

The Structure of the Visit

The Team Visit requires four days, including travel. The team typically arrives at the school during the first day. There may be a dinner with school personnel or with the team. There may also be meetings after dinner. The second and third days of the visit are full ones, with most of the day itself at the school, touring facilities and meeting with members of the school community. Evenings and time between meetings are typically spent conferring with your team. The final day involves delivery of an oral report by the Chair of the team to school administrators and then travel home.

Much of the visit will be spent in interviews with members of the school community. You will be meeting with the Mission Integration Team (MIT), the school administration, and others. The Chair of the Visiting Team will have set a schedule to assure adequate meeting time with relevant groups and individuals. In addition to meetings, you will be reviewing other documents, such as strategic plans and reports of activities, and school publications. You will also be observing the general atmosphere and setting of the school and the informal interactions among people you will encounter during your visit.

What to Look For

During the visit, you will be looking for evidence that the school embodies Marianist Education. It is the responsibility of the school to provide your team with this evidence. To a large extent, that evidence will be presented in terms of the school's Mission Integration Plan. The MIT should be prepared to explain the plan and the rationale that led to its development, and provide evidence of its successful completion.

The Plan may well have undergone significant revision over the four years of its existence. Originally planned activities may have been replaced by others. Timelines may have been modified. Rather than looking for strict adherence to the original plan, you should be convinced that the MIT has been intentional about creating and fulfilling their plan, taking care to meet the needs of the school community, and that progress has been made toward the overall goal of improving Marianist Education in the school over the time of the plan.

Trust Your Experience

In addition to the specific elements addressed in the Mission Integration Plan, you should be alert to other indicators of Marianist Education. In general, we can infer that Marianist Education is occurring if we see the Characteristics of Marianist Education in

evidence throughout the school community. You have been invited to serve on a Visiting team because you have a strong sense of what Marianist Education is. Ask yourself: "Does this look and sound and feel like a Marianist school?" The Marianist way of educating should be evident in the décor and arrangement of the school, in the way people talk about education, in the priorities they have for the school, in the reasons they have for being there, and in the way they treat one another. Remember that you are looking for evidence. What is it that conveys to you that the school provides a Marianist Education?

After the Visit

Following the visit, the Visiting Team Chair will prepare a written draft of the Visit Report. This report serves as the official record of your observations and recommendations. Your Chair will share the draft with you for your review and comments. Usually, this review is conducted via e-mail, though there may be a need for telephone contact if there are elements of the report that require further conversation.

Once the members of the Visiting Team have agreed on the content, the Chair sends a copy of the completed report to the Office of Sponsorship and to the school Administration and MIT Chair. Once the report has been finalized, your service on the Visiting Team comes to an end.

In Summary ...

The Team Visit, though only one part of the Mission Integration Process, plays an essential role in the ongoing improvement of Marianist Education. Far from being disinterested observers, members of a Visiting Team embrace a mission to enhance Marianist Education as a means to continue Mary's mission of bringing Jesus to life in the world.

A Team Visit is a synergistic growth process. The visited school receives the benefit of a fresh perspective on its efforts to carry out its mission as a Marianist-sponsored school. Members of the Visiting Team not only share their insights, but gain new ones.

Visiting Teams: Skills for the Visit

The purpose of a Team Visit is to gather evidence that the school being visited has followed its plan to improve the Marianist character of its education. Gathering information will include reviewing printed materials, observing the environment and the interaction of people within it, and engaging in conversation with members of the school community.

In inviting you to be part of a Visiting Team, we recognize that you possess the skills necessary to serve as a school visitor. This document highlights some of those skills you will be called upon to use.

Formal Conversation

During your visit, you will be meeting formally and informally with a variety of individuals and groups. At least some of these will take the form of structured conversations, with members of the school community presenting information and you asking questions to solicit further information.

Introducing Yourself and Your Mission

While most of the people with whom you are meeting will have at least some ideas of why you are there, do not assume that they are fully aware of your purpose. Begin each meeting by introducing yourself and sharing briefly about your experience in Marianist Education. Spend a few minutes briefly describing the overall purpose of the visit. Let those with whom you are meeting know what you hope to learn from meeting with them. Assure them that the purpose of the visit is not to evaluate individuals, but to assess how well the school as a whole embodies Marianist Education. Give them the opportunity to introduce themselves to you. The rapport established at the beginning of your meeting will often determine how forthcoming people are with the information you seek. Let them know that you value what they have to say. You may want to let them know you will be taking notes during your conversations.

Listening

You are there to gather information, specifically, evidence of how the school conducts Marianist Education. Listening is a critical skill for this task. During your conversations, you will be posing some questions you have prepared in consultation with the other members of your team. Try to ask open-ended questions that will give

participants the opportunity to share broadly about their activities and programs. Give the speaker your complete attention. Maintain eye contact. Listen carefully to the responses and be prepared to ask follow-up questions that may deviate from your original plan.

Note-taking

Unless you have a remarkable memory, taking notes during an interview will be necessary. You may not have the opportunity to meet with the same people again, so accurately noting what they have said is important. Visits often require you to move from one meeting to another in rapid succession, with little or no time between to correct your notes, so make sure you will understand what you have written a few hours later. Taking meaningful notes while maintaining a reasonable degree of eye contact is a skill that will improve with practice.

Visit Management

Team Visits are intense experiences. You have much to see and do and a very limited amount of time available. Do your best to stick to the schedule provided. Within meetings, manage the time to make sure you have the opportunity to gather all of the information you need. When meeting with a group of people, allow for discussions to be as informal and free-flowing as possible, but make sure all have an opportunity to participate and that the group remains on task. End the session as much on time as possible. If you fall behind, it will probably impact future meetings. If you have two or more sessions scheduled without a break, try to take at least a few minutes between them to complete your thoughts for the upcoming session.

Remember that you will have much to do in addition to the formal conversations. You will need to spend time observing informal interactions, touring school facilities, and scanning school publications. The Chair of your team will have scheduled times for team meetings. You may find it helpful to plan out even the unscheduled portion of your day. Don't forget to allow yourself some down time to relax and clear your head.

Avoiding Prescriptions

Marianist Education is characteristically the same in all of our schools, but the particular way in which it is lived differs from school to school. As a member of a Visiting Team, you will be observing the manifestation of the Characteristics of Marianist Education within a particular school culture.

As a part of the Visit Report, your team will be making recommendations for the school to address challenges it faces in improving its delivery of Marianist Education. When making these recommendations, it is important to focus on the "What" rather than the "How." Avoid prescribing specific solutions as a means of accomplishing the recommendation. For example:

- "Investigate ways of addressing faith development among the faculty and staff" rather than: "Start a faculty faith-sharing group."
- "Explore ways to increase knowledge of the Marianist heritage" rather than "Require all new faculty to take the on-line Marianist Founders course."

It is perfectly proper to suggest such things as faith-sharing groups and courses as possibilities to be considered, but not as mandates that must be adopted. Sharing your own knowledge and experience of these possibilities, whether you have experienced them yourself or seen them at work in other schools, may be very helpful. Just be careful that you don't present these possibilities as things the school must do. You are highlighting challenges to be addressed. Rely on the members of the school's own Mission Integration Team to implement your recommendations in ways that are most appropriate for that school community.

In Summary ...

Even though you and the educators you will be visiting are all part of the Marianist Family, a Team Visit is not a social call. As members of the same family, you care about the school community and want to see it thrive. The Team Visit provides a means to structure that caring into an effective vehicle for the improvement of Marianist Education.

Visiting Teams: Visit Ethics and Attitudes

As a member of a Visiting Team, you are the face of the Office of Sponsorship during the visit. As such, you must realize that, whether it is your intent or not, your words and actions may be interpreted by others as representing more than simply your own personal viewpoint.

This document highlights some of the attitudes and ethical considerations appropriate to a member of a Visiting Team.

A Guest with a Mission

It goes without saying that, as a visitor, you are a guest in the school. However, you also have an important job to do. Sometimes, as a school visitor, you may feel you are disrupting the teaching and learning environment. Of course you are! All educators know that any variation from the planned routine is a disruption. Having dealt with such disruption yourself, you may be reluctant to inflict that on another educator.

Of course, you should be as respectful as possible of the educational process. You should also remember, however, that you have an important job to do and a very limited time to do it. If someone with whom you need to speak is unavailable because of other responsibilities, consider if it is possible for you to find out what you need to know another way. If not, make the case, through the Chair of the Visiting Team that the person is made available to you or to the team.

Just as all educators know that disruptions are just that, disruptive, all educators also know that they can find some way to compensate. Be respectful and accommodating to your hosts, but know that they will respect the importance of your work and will accommodate your reasonable needs if at all possible.

Confidentiality

There is a bit of a paradox involved in a Team Visit. On one hand, the purpose of the visit is to gather information. This includes both evidence that a school delivers Marianist Education and ideas that expand your own concept of Marianist Education. On the other hand, as a member of a Visiting Team, you may be privy to information that, while not necessarily secret, is also not necessarily public knowledge. One must use professional discretion in sharing such information beyond your Visiting Team.

When in doubt, it is always a good idea to ask an administrator at the school about the status of the information and the proper latitude in sharing it.

Information that you may learn of a private nature about specific individuals should never be shared beyond the Visiting Team. If information should come to your attention that you believe to be a serious nature involving ethics, morals, or improper or unprofessional conduct, such information should be shared with the Chair of your Visiting Team, who will then inform the chief administrator of the school and/or the Office of Sponsorship.

Impartiality

All of us bring our own experiences to a School Visit. Some of those may include either direct or indirect prior experiences of the school being visited or of the people who make up that school community. Sometimes those experiences may cause us to have a perception of the school independent of the visit or the materials reviewed in preparation for the visit. While it is impossible to disregard completely these perceptions, it is important to approach the visit as objectively as possible. Prior information may certainly be relevant, but you should be careful to remain open to the evidence the school provides to you for the visit.

In evaluating observations made about a visited school, care should be taken when making comparisons to other schools with which you are familiar. While all Marianist sponsored schools have much in common, each school exists in its own unique context. How this school is characteristically Marianist within that unique context should be the focus of your observations and comments. Take care when tempted to say, "In my school, we do it this way." Sharing the good things about your school, or another with which you are familiar, can be helpful, but not if you expect the visited school to do things in exactly the same way. Presenting options that people at the visited school may not have considered is appropriate; prescribing a "better way" to do things is not.

Intellectual Property

One of the reasons that you, as an educator at another Marianist school, are part of a Visiting Team is that the visit provides you a wonderful opportunity to learn about how things are done in other Marianist sponsored schools and to gain insights and ideas to take back to your own school. While Marianist educators are characteristically willing to share, it is both common courtesy and professional best practice to request permission for the use or adaptation of materials you may find that will be useful in

your school situation. It is also professionally responsible to properly attribute those materials to their creators.

Maintaining a Positive Approach

As an educator, you know how uncomfortable an evaluation experience, whether internal or by an accrediting agency, can be. Try to put the people with whom you meet at ease. The purpose of the School Visit is to find evidence that the school is conducting Marianist Education. It is not to find fault with people or programs. Try to maintain an affirming, positive approach in your interactions with members of the school community.

At the same time, you may discover elements of the school's life that are not particularly in concert with your understanding of Marianist Education. These can be reflected as recommendations in your Visit Report. Even though they represent perceived gaps or shortcomings, they should still be expressed in a manner that encourages improvement. No school, not even yours, is a perfect embodiment of Marianist Education. The Mission Integration process itself is centered in Family Spirit. It is about providing positive affirmation and constructive criticism to help schools be better at educating in the Marianist tradition.

In Summary ...

Mission Integration Team Visits differ from those team visits that are part of an accreditation process. Accreditation visitors may care about the process and about education, but their relationship with the visited school is temporary.

In contrast, as a member of a Mission Integration Visiting Team, you are a partner in the ongoing Marianist mission. As such, you not only maintain the highest standards of professionalism, but also adopt an attitude, base in Family Spirit, of concern for growth of the visited school not for the sake of the process, but for the sake of the mission.

Visiting Teams: Team Leadership

The Chair of a Visiting Team bears the responsibility of leading the team and serving as the liaison with the Office of Sponsorship and with the administration of the school to be visited. This document outlines the major responsibilities of a Visiting Team Chair.

You are invited to serve as Chair of a Visiting Team because of prior successful experience in serving on Visiting Teams. The Office of Sponsorship, your team members, and the visited school rely on your experience and leadership for an effective and smooth running visit.

Before the Visit

Once you know which school you will be visiting, contact the administration to set a tentative date for the visit. Plan for a four-day visit, with arrival on Day One and departure on Day Four. Dates should be tentative until other members of the Visiting Team can be consulted.

Once dates are agreed upon, you should discuss sleeping accommodations, meals, meeting space for the team, ground transportation, and other particulars for the visit with a contact person from the school. Team members typically make their own travel arrangements, with costs reimbursed in accordance with the Travel Reimbursement Policy of the Office of Sponsorship. Providing for lodging, ground transportation, and meals is the responsibility of the school. While you are not responsible for travel arrangements, it is important that team members communicate with you, as well as with the school contact person and the administrative assistant in the Office of Sponsorship, their travel plans.

Sometime before the visit, you and the other team members will receive from the Office of Sponsorship a packet of information about the school. This packet will include reports from prior visits, survey data, and, perhaps, other information. It is the responsibility of all team members to carefully review these materials, as well as content from the school's website, in advance of the visit. You should schedule a time to discuss these materials, either in a conference call prior to the visit or in a team meeting soon after arrival at the school, to establish a context for the observations you will make during the visit.

You and other team members may wish to exchange cell phone numbers in case there are last minute adjustments to plans during travel.

The Visit Schedule

As soon as dates for the visit are agreed upon, you and the school contact person should begin to develop a time schedule for the visit. The first step in doing so, is deciding with what groups and individuals you and the team will meet formally. A typical list includes:

- The President (or Head of School)
- The Principal (or Vice Principal)
- The Mission Integration Team
- The Administrative Team
- Chairs of academic departments
- The Campus Ministry Team, including chaplains and retreat coordinators
- The LIFE moderators and students
- The Athletic Director
- The Coordinator of Student Activities
- Groups of faculty and staff members
- Groups of students
- Board members
- Groups of parents

This list is meant merely to be a guide. Given the particular structure of the school you are visiting, some of these groups may not exist or may be structured differently. Some schools may have additional groups or individuals with whom you may wish to meet, for example, a coordinator of service activities or mission immersion activities, counselors, student government moderators, or admissions staff members. In reviewing the school's website and in conversation with the school contact, you can decide how best to spend your limited time during the visit.

Formal conversations are typically 45 minutes to an hour in length. It is usually a good idea to keep the focus on each meeting on one particular group or aspect of the school. You may find it is impossible to schedule meetings of your entire team with all of the individuals and groups you would like, so you may wish to split your team so that multiple interviews can be scheduled at the same time.

Make sure you have met with all those you consider most critical by the end of the second full day of the visit. Reserving the final day for your oral report allows you to have considered everything in the preparation of the report.

Time for the Team

It is important to balance the time for the collection of data with the time needed to process it. Your team will need time to individually and collectively assimilate your observations and synthesize them into a report. Try to schedule at least a few minutes between meetings for team members to clarify their notes and collect their thoughts. Schedule team meetings, within the daily schedule or in the evenings, to share observations and insights. It is usually a good idea to save the late afternoon and evening of the second full day of the visit for the team to meet to help prepare the oral report.

Mentoring Team Members

Team members rely on your leadership. In particular, those new to service on a Visiting Team will look to you for guidance on what they should be doing and how they should conduct themselves during the visit. Being clear in your communications with them will help allay any anxiety they may have. One learns to be an effective Visiting Team member by doing. Encourage team members to participate as fully as possible. You may want to consider having particular areas of interest covered by designated members of your team. Be available to your team to help the cope with unanticipated problems that might arise.

The Visit Report

Communicating your observations and conclusions is an important responsibility of the Chair of the Visiting Team. This communication occurs through an oral report, delivered at the end of the visit, and a more formal written report completed within 30 days of the visit. The document *The Visit Report* covers these communications in detail.

In Summary ...

The Chair of a Visiting Team is called upon to exhibit Marianist Leadership through:

- *Purposefully directing the visit for the improvement of Marianist Education;*
- *Demonstrating concern for the development of the team;*
- *Providing for its needs and mentoring its members;*
- *Collaborating effectively with members of the team, school personnel and the Office of Sponsorship*
- *Adapting and responding to the often changing circumstances of a Team Visit; and embracing the role of Marianist Education in bringing Jesus to life in the world.*

Visiting Teams: The Visit Report

Communicating the observations and inferences gleaned from the School Visit is an important responsibility of the Visiting Team. This communication occurs through an oral report at the end of the visit and through a more formal written report, which becomes the official record of the team's observations. Although the Chair of the Visiting Team delivers these reports, their preparation involves the collaboration of the entire Visiting Team.

This document outlines the format and content of these reports.

The Oral Report

The last act of the Visiting Team at the school is the delivery of the oral report. The report is typically delivered to the President and Principal of the school. Additional people, such as the Mission Integration Team (MIT) Coordinator may be present at the discretion of the school administrators. The oral report is typically delivered by the Chair of the Visiting Team. Other members of the Visiting Team are encouraged to attend if possible.

While the oral report must be delivered before the Visiting Team has the benefit of time to reflect on the visit, it is important that it address all of the main observations that will be covered in the written Visit Report. No one who hears the oral report should be surprised by anything that appears in the written report.

The oral report should summarize the conclusions reached by the Visiting Team. All areas to be addressed in the written report should be covered. The general format includes a discussion of:

- The school's efforts to implement its Mission Integration Plan, including successes and shortfalls;
- Strengths of the school in providing Marianist Education;
- Challenges the school faces in continuing to improve its delivery of Marianist Education and the Visiting Team's recommendations for addressing those challenges.

Be careful to not be overly prescriptive in offering recommendations. Recommendations are suggestions rather than requirements. The Visiting Tea will have noted some areas for possible improvement and is recommending that these areas be addressed. How the school addresses them is the purview of the school, not the Visiting Team. There is a delicate balance to be maintained between prescription and suggestion. For example, recommending that the school investigate and implement ways to increase prayer opportunities for students is preferable to recommending the school schedule a weekly prayer service. It is certainly appropriate to suggest resources of which you may be aware or ideas that have proven successful at other schools, but these should be presented as possibilities, not requirements.

As part of the oral report, the Chair of the Visiting Team should remind the administrators of the process to be followed in the continuing communication involving the written report, commentary by the Office of Sponsorship, and written response by the administration. An outline of this process can be found in the document: *Overview of the Process*.

The Written Report

The written report is the formal record of the findings of the Visiting Team. While the Chair bears the responsibility for writing the report, a Marianist approach assumes that the report will be a collaboration of all members of the Visiting Team. Typically, the Chair prepares a draft and circulates it to the team for comment, the comments are incorporated in a revised draft, and a final report is produced once consensus is reached. This process should be completed within 30 days of the completion of the visit. If there are difficulties meeting this deadline, the Office of Sponsorship should be informed as soon as possible.

Technical Specifics

The written report should include the technical specifics of the visit and a narrative of the team's findings. The technical specifics include:

- The school visited
- The dates of the visit
- The members of the Visiting Team and their school affiliations
- A listing of individuals and groups with whom the Visiting Team met

- A list of supporting documentation reviewed by the Visiting Team

The Report Narrative

The narrative portion of the report should convey the findings of the team. It should expand upon the information shared in the oral report and follow the same general format:

- A summary of the successes of the school in fulfilling its plan;
- A summary of the areas of the plan, if any, in which the school has fallen short of completion, including acknowledgement of rationale for the shortfall, if any, that has been provided or discovered;
- A summary of the strengths of the school in providing Marianist Education. This may include references to elements of the plan as well as additional strengths noted by the team;
- Challenges the school faces in continuing to improve its delivery of Marianist Education;
- Recommendations for addressing the challenges

The written report is sent digitally via e-mail to the Office of Sponsorship and to the President, Principal, and MIT Coordinator of the school. After review, the Office of Sponsorship will write a commentary on the Visit Report, affirming the findings and addressing any additional concerns. The administration of the school will acknowledge in writing the Visit Report and the commentary.

With acknowledgement of the Visit Report, the four-year Mission Integration cycle formally ends and the next cycle begins.

In Summary ...

Marianist value reflection as essential for growth. The Visit Report serves as an important tool for the members of a school community to reflect on their mission. It is both a record of a school's progress in its development as a Marianist sponsored school and also serves as an indicator of future direction for the continuation of that development.