INTRODUCTION

The charism of Blessed Edmund Rice is a special gift to the church. This gift is lived out through schools and other educational initiatives through education within the “evangelizing mission of the Church.” To ensure that this charism continues, the *Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education* call us to accountability. Are we true to Blessed Edmund’s “vision of education?” Are our policies and practices consistent with the values we profess to hold? Questions such as these lead us to a process of evaluation. The results of this evaluation should be a source of growth for deepening the influence of the *Essential Elements* in the life of the school.

In order to fulfill its responsibility for the implementation of the mission within the schools of the Province, the Provincial Leadership Team of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North American, mandates a system of accountability for the schools that:

- Ensures the ongoing commitment to and development of the Mission of the school
- Creates a process of reflection and self-study
- Calls for a report on the progress and growth of *The Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education* in the life of the school every five years. This report is designed to identify strengths and target areas for growth;
- Includes a site visit by a member of the Office of Educational Services and a team of educators from Edmund Rice Schools;
- Concludes with a letter from the Provincial Leadership Team of Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America affirming the school’s continuing status as an ERCBNA school.
COMPONENTS OF PROCESS

(TYPICALLY THIS PROCESS TAKES 12 MONTHS. NUMBERED STEPS CORRESPOND WITH TIMELINE / WORKSHEET.)

PREPARATION (BEGINS ABOUT A YEAR PRIOR TO THE VISIT)

1. Initial conversation with school leader(s) and OES the semester prior to self-study process. The EEE process is reviewed, and school leader is asked to appoint a steering committee and a tentative date is set for the meeting with the steering committee and approximate time of the visit.

2. Meeting of OES with administrators and self-study steering committee. The purpose is to review the process and expectations, and set a tentative timeline for meetings, gathering of data and feedback, writing of the report, submission of report to board, to OES, and the site visit. The steering committee discusses how best to engage the various constituencies of the school community.

SELF – STUDY PROCESS

3. School Community Meeting, led by the steering committee, to re-energize the school community around the Essential Elements and begin the self-study process. Typically this meeting would take about an hour.

   a. School Community Members present
      i. School Leaders
      ii. Faculty
      iii. Staff
      iv. Some Directors
      v. Some Parents
      vi. Some Students

   b. Elements of the meeting
      i. Re-energize the community about the vitality of the Essential Elements (EE) by beginning with the “Verbs of Essential Elements Reflection.”
      ii. Give an overview of the process, including,
          1. Rationale: to maintain Catholic identity and commitment to charism and values of Blessed Edmund Rice
          2. Steps required to complete the Self Study
          3. Documents to generate
iii. Emphasize importance of reflection and analysis in order to gather data needed to form the Growth Plan
iv. Build ownership of process and product by the entire school community
c. Ask representatives to communicate information to representative groups after the meeting.
   i. Parents report to Parent Guild/Organization
   ii. Directors report to Board
   iii. Students report to Student Council

4. School Community-wide reflection process led by the steering committee
   a. The purpose is to reflect on the lived experience of the Essential Elements (EE), i.e., how they are practiced in the school.
   b. This reflection process can be conducted through small group conversations, e.g., faculty departments, non-teaching staff, administrators, student leaders, board members, etc. Use “Worksheet # 1 EEE Self-Study: Strengths and Challenges” to record evidence of the Essential Elements and suggest improvements for each. Data gathering may include individual reflection guides or surveys, if appropriate, for a particular group.
   c. Suggested reflection groups:
      i. Faculty / staff
      ii. Administrators
      iii. Board members
      iv. Students
      v. Parents
      vi. Interests groups
      vii. Others, as appropriate in your school
   d. All reflections sheet collations, survey data, etc. are given to the steering committee.

5. During the self-study period, a document committee gathers information for the following components of the report:
   a. Narrative about significant events in the life of the school over the past five years (2 – 5 pages)
   b. Copy of the latest school census
   c. Description of how each segment of the school community becomes aware of the EE
   d. Summary of the process used to develop Self-Study data

6. Analysis of the feedback from the group reflections and survey data (if any) by the steering committee.
   a. Reviews all of the feedback in order to present it to the faculty and staff in a simple, coherent, and usable form
   b. Prepares feedback to the administrators, faculty, and staff, including the strong EE areas and the areas that seem to require the most improvement during the next five years
c. The steering committee plans the full-day workshop in a way that will engage the faculty in the process of selecting 2-3 Essential Elements to focus on during the next five year period and propose goals and action steps.

7. Full Day Workshop, to reflect on the School wide reflection results and determine priorities and make suggestions for the School Growth Plan.
   The steering committee:
   a. Presents results of school wide reflection process, including areas for commendation and suggested areas of growth for each essential element.
   b. Focuses on the 4 or 5 areas that the reflection process indicated need the most attention.
   c. Facilitates small and large group process which will determine priorities:
      i. Select the 2 or 3 EE that the school wants to focus on during the five year period.
      ii. Suggest goals, actions, when to begin, and person or group responsible, for the 2 or 3 EE's selected.
   d. Records all ideas generated to be considered for inclusion in the School Growth Plan.

8. Development of School Growth Plan by the steering committee.
   a. Analyzes material generated at the full day workshop, especially outcomes and action steps for the two or three Essential Elements selected for growth;
   b. Uses “Worksheet #2 EEE School Growth Plan” for each of the two or three Essential Elements chosen:
      i. Formulates a goal or “desired outcome” for each Essential Element chosen
      ii. Lists action steps to address each goal / desired outcome
      iii. Develops a 5-year time line to complete the action steps (Actions can begin in the first, second, or third year of the plan)
      iv. Lists resources in terms of personnel, material and funding required
      v. Identifies person(s) responsible for implementation and evaluation (School Leaders are ultimately responsible for all implementation.)

     Please note that for each EE chosen, it is better to focus on a few solid actions that can realistically be addressed and are achievable over the five year period, than to have many that are not realistic and / or achievable. Try to suggest a variety of individuals (by position) and groups to implement the plan. And while you will want to capitalize on the energy of the school community in the immediate future when you set your timeline, be aware that actions steps can begin in the first, second, or third year of your school growth plan.

9. Presentation of School Growth Plan draft to Administration, Faculty, and Staff by the Steering Committee
   a. Presents draft at a faculty meeting
   b. Facilitates process to solicit feedback
   c. Builds ownership of the plan
10. Consideration and revision of School Growth Plan by the Steering Committee.
   a. Takes all feedback into consideration, including the amount of energy and commitment demonstrated around the various goals / desired outcomes, and actions steps.
   b. Produces a final draft of the School Growth Plan that is feasible and has community support. The draft should include all the elements listed in Step #8, and can use either the “Worksheet # 2 EEE School Growth Plan” format or some other user-friendly format. It is understood that changing circumstances may require adjustments to the plan in the future.

11. Preparation of Self-Study Document. The Steering Committee, with assistance of the document committee, incorporates all of the components, including the School Growth Plan, into a written report, which includes:
   a. Narrative about significant events in the life of the school over the past five years (2 – 5 pages)
   b. Copy of the latest school census
   c. Description of how each segment of the school community becomes aware of the EE
   d. Summary of the process used to develop Self-Study data
   e. Chart of commendations and areas of growth for each of the 7 EE (Worksheet #1)
   f. School Growth Plan (Worksheet #2 for each EE selected, or some other format.)

12. Submission of Self-Study Document (including School Growth Plan) to the Board of Directors. The Head of School submits the report to inform the Board of the results of the Self-Study and the School Growth Plan and obtain its approval.

13. Set-up of Schedule and Focus Groups for the Visit of the Essential Elements Evaluation Team. This will take place about a month before the visit.
   a. The OES chair of the visiting team suggests a basic schedule for the visit, including meetings with the steering committee, and requests focus groups with various school constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, board members. (See #15.)
   b. The administrators / steering committee
      i. Invites persons and sets up focus groups;
      ii. Sends schedule and names of persons in the groups to OES.

14. Submission of Complete Report (electronically) to OES and visiting team by the Head of School at least two weeks prior to the visit. Timely submission of the report will allow careful reading and preparation by the team prior to the visit. Please have printed copies of the report available for each team member upon arrival for the visit.
15. School Visit
   a. Team of 4 people; working in pairs

   b. Purpose of Visit
      i. Continue conversation on role of EE in life of the school
      ii. Validation of findings as reported in Self Study
      iii. Provide fresh perspective and offer new insight about living out the EE

   c. Duration of visit: three days

   d. Components of Visit:
      i. First day: Tour of school, meetings with administrative team and with steering committee; dinner with administrative team and steering committee.
      ii. Meetings with Focus Groups of 6-8 people to include the following groups (as applicable):
         1. Board Members
         2. Parents
         3. Students
         4. Faculty and staff
         5. Non-classroom educators
            a. Mission integration / campus ministry
            b. Athletic director / coaches
            c. Guidance /counseling
            d. Technology
            e. Librarians

      6. Administrative personnel
         a. Finance
         b. Advancement
         c. Admissions
         d. Support staff
      i. Time for visiting team reflection and sharing of insights to build picture of the school community and their awareness of Growth Plan.
      ii. Formulation of oral report containing initial commendations and comments on Growth Plan
         1. Shared with Administrative Team privately
         2. Shared with School Community publically at celebration

16. Preparation of Written Report by OES and Visiting Team
    The written report, which will be sent to the school within a month, will include commendations and recommendations on the living of the Essential Elements at the school and on the Growth Plan.
17. School Response to Written Report
   a. The Steering Committee and the Administrators revises the School Growth Plan based on recommendations in the OES written report, with specific steps and timelines for achieving designated actions steps.
   b. The Faculty reviews the Revised Growth Plan.
   c. The Head of School submits the Revised School Growth Plan to Board of Directors for approval.

18. The Head of School submits the Revised School Growth Plan to the OES.

19. OES Recommends the School for a Letter of Affirmation from the ERCBNA Office of Evangelization. This recommendation acknowledges the success completion of the Essential Elements Evaluation process and the School Growth Plan.

20. The Director of Evangelization, on behalf of the Province Leadership Team, sends a letter of Affirmation.
   d. Director of Evangelization writes letter of affirmation on behalf of Province Leadership Team
   e. Letter is sent to the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Head of School, and School Community
      i. Affirms the school’s Self-Study
      ii. Endorses the School Growth Plan
      iii. Encourages a celebration of the school’s achievement

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN OVER FIVE YEARS

21. Implementation of the School Growth Plan
    The Head of School appoints an Implementation Committee to oversee and coordinate efforts to implement the Growth Plan over the five year period.