

## Characteristics and Criteria for Lasallian Mission

The Long Island-New England District has identified six characteristics of schools and agencies that are committed to the charism and mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle as lived out in this District. Following each characteristic is a list of criteria that describes how each characteristic is actualized in a Lasallian school or agency in the LI-NE District. These criteria are not meant to be checklists to determine the extent to which an institution is “Lasallian,” but rather as benchmarks that an institution would strive to reach. The characteristics and criteria are not static; rather, they represent the start of a dialogue and on-going process meant to deepen an institution’s awareness of what it means to be Lasallian.

### Characteristic I. The Spirit of Faith and Zeal

*The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith...Secondly, the spirit of this Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children.*

“The Spirit of this Institute,” The Common Rule, 1718

#### **Lasallian ministries are faith based programs and services that openly:**

- **Recognize**
- **Study**
- **Promote**
- **Celebrate**
- **Implement**

**the charism of John Baptist de La Salle.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. offer Lasallian formation programs/retreats for the Board, administration, faculty, staff and students/clients;
2. offer opportunities for prayer, meditation, and reflection for the faculty, staff, and students/clients;
3. offer values-based education;
4. offer opportunities for liturgies where and when appropriate;
5. offer religious education and sacramental preparation as appropriate;
6. provide an active Junior or Senior High School Lasallian Youth program;
7. operate upon a mission statement and philosophy that include specific reference to the Lasallian heritage;
8. hire faculty and staff who are open to the Lasallian mission and have a commitment to serving together and by association;
9. offer Lasallian symbols, pictures, and personal witness that are present and visible throughout the school or agency and are visible to the broader community;
10. participate in Regional and District-sponsored programs and workshops (e.g. Huether Lasallian Conference, Buttimer Institute, Lasallian Leadership Institute).

## **Characteristic II. Service of the Poor**

*You are under the obligation to instruct the children of the poor. You should, consequently, cultivate a very special tenderness for them and procure their spiritual welfare as far as you will be able, considering them as members of Jesus Christ, and his loved ones.*

Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle, 80.3, circa 1718

**Lasallian ministries are committed to service of the poor through programs and activities that accept, welcome, educate and/or serve those who are poor:**

- **Economically**
- **Educationally**
- **Affectively**
- **Through a deficit of values.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. offer the opportunity for youth who suffer from poverty, as defined above, to succeed;
2. identify those in need and provide special programs to promote retention;
3. provide for faculty and staff an education and sensitization to the needs of the poor;
4. allocate budgeted resources that include a financial commitment to the poor;
5. provide financial aid to help sustain an economically diverse population;
6. offer a comprehensive justice education program that stresses community service and advocacy for social issues;
7. participate in the Regional twinning program with overseas Lasallian schools and agencies.

## **Characteristic III. Providing Excellent Programs**

*It is, then, your duty to teach the children entrusted to you; this is your duty every day. They must understand what you say, so you must give them instructions adapted to their capacity, otherwise what you say would be of little use. For this purpose, you must prepare yourself and train yourself...for to teach, you must first know.*

Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle, 33.3, circa 1718

**Lasallian ministries are characterized by programs and services that are:**

- **Well-managed**
- **Practical**
- **Person-centered**
- **Professionally accredited.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. have competent and caring faculty and staff;
2. offer programs that promote critical thinking;
3. provide programs that encourage the development of life skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
4. offer opportunities for enrichment and recreation;

5. provide services and programs to assist the personal development of students/clients;
6. participate in ongoing program evaluation and program development;
7. advocate for appropriate programming for each student/client;
8. make use of community resources and make available their own resources to the wider community;
9. collaborate with outside programs and agencies;
10. provide recognition events;
11. offer services that support families.

## **Characteristic IV. Embracing Diversity**

*The Lasallian school is to be a living community where young people, coming from different social, (ethnic, religious) and family backgrounds, educate one another by mutual understanding and respect, openness of mind in dialogue, acceptance of the uniqueness and limitations of each, growth in the spirit of service, and the practice of justice and charity.*

The Brothers of the Christian Schools: A Declaration, 46.2, 1967

**Lasallian ministries are characterized by programs and services that:**

- **Value**
- **Seek**
- **Serve**
- **Integrate**

**diversity.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. have clear admissions policies that allow for and promote diversity;
2. are open to students/clients of all faiths;
3. make deliberate efforts to have a faculty/staff that reflects the community served;
4. provide cultural awareness training and training in the various faith traditions for faculty and students/clients;
5. accommodate learning differences to the degree possible;
6. offer opportunities to reward and celebrate the gifts and talents of all in the community.

## **Characteristic V. Working Together and By Association**

*The challenge now is for the Brothers and all other Lasallian educators to discover together in open dialogue how to found and promote in new foundations the associative dimension of their commitment on behalf of the human and Christian education of the young, especially the poor.*

The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission, 3.31, 1997

**Lasallian ministries are characterized by programs and services that share association:**

- **in and among all who are part of the community of the local school or agency**
- **among ministries in the District**

- **among ministries in the Region**
- **among ministries in the International Institute.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. offer activities that promote working together and by association within the school/agency;
2. promote the on-going development of a Lasallian community within the school/agency;
3. offer the witness of adults who model what it means to work together and by association;
4. provide experiences that engage parents and families in the life of the community of the school/agency;
5. sustain relationships with former students/clients;
6. collaborate with other Lasallian ministries in the District, Region, and International Institute.

## **Characteristic VI. Reverence for Each Member of the Lasallian Community as a Unique Person**

*Programs in Lasallian schools...must be frequently examined to see that they correspond to real needs...Persons must be the center of educational systems rather than the prestige of some academic curriculum.*

The Brothers of the Christian Schools: A Declaration, 31.2, 1967

**Lasallian ministries are characterized by programs and services reflective of a belief:**

- **in the dignity of each person as a child of God**
- **in the importance of each person in his or her own right**
- **that all persons are to be treated fairly.**

Therefore, Lasallian ministries:

1. promote interpersonal interaction marked by respect, cooperation, generosity, and unconditional positive regard;
2. give evidence that individuals are known by name, supported during times of struggle, celebrated during times of joy, and honored for the significant role they fulfill in the school/agency;
3. promote personal dignity by helping youth understand and counter the forces exploiting them or hindering their development;
4. give evidence that faculty and staff take a personal interest in students/clients, as well as in their own colleagues;
5. operate through codes of conduct, rules, and discipline statements that are based on each student's/client's ability to grow.