



Sacred Heart Education

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Sunday, February 21, 2021

Greetings from the Conference of Sacred Heart Education. In our fifth edition of *Trustee Topics*, the bi-monthly education to mission resource for Sacred Heart trustees, we explore the role of boards of trustees and school leadership teams and their co-responsibility to hold in trust the values of Sacred Heart education as captured in the *Goals and Criteria*. This topic seems timely, given that these winter months provide boards and their committees the time essential to significant discussions and decisions regarding advancing mission. Even more important is that we have begun the Re-Visioning of the *Goals and Criteria* to write the 2020 edition of the *Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools*. The participation of our boards is essential.

What are Goals and Criteria?

The *Goals and Criteria* is an expression of timeless principles that capture the essence of Sacred Heart education. This pivotal document has played a fundamental role in supporting mission integrity since its first publication in 1975. The principles named inform our mission as Catholic schools in light of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat's charism and the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart. As stewards of the *Goals and Criteria*, Sacred Heart boards of trustees work in concert with the Society of the Sacred Heart to ensure mission integrity. As stewards of mission, Sacred Heart trustees view the principles *expressed in the Goals and Criteria* as the guides in their work to ensure continuity of mission, the best educational climate for today's students, and the sustainability of the schools for future generations.

What is the source of the *Goals and Criteria*?

While the *Goals and Criteria* are rooted in Sophie's vision of education and the spirit of the Society of the Sacred Heart, this statement fails to capture the energy at the heart of the evolution of Sophie's vision and the mission of Sacred Heart education.

Catherine Baxter, RSCJ (Kay), explained:

We need frequently to remind ourselves that the sources of the Goals and Criteria are the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, as expressed and internalized in the life and work of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, in the lives and work of generation after generation of Religious of the Sacred Heart, and today in the lives and work of new generations of women and men who find that her vision reflects and nourishes their own spirit and values.

Sr. Baxter's presentation, [The Goals and Criteria: Fruit of a Two Hundred Year Tradition](#), captures the energy of an evolving vision of education that lives in the hearts and minds of dedicated educators responding to the needs of children in particular times and contexts.

The story of this vision of educating young people in the midst of complexity and change is fascinating. First articulated in 1975, the *Goals and Criteria* were re-visioned by the Religious and Educators of the Sacred Heart in 1990 and 2005. We now have begun the work of re-visioning that will culminate in the 2020 edition.

The Timelessness of Vision

Both the vision and experience of Sacred Heart education are timeless and dynamic. While the principles are timeless, the context in which Sacred Heart educators engage young people is constantly changing, and this reality and the needs of students demand fresh response. The Goals in particular declare what is essential to the vitality of Sophie's vision as it is lived today.

Essential Insights of the 1975, 1990 and 2005 editions of the *Goals and Criteria*

An ideal way to capture the spirit of each edition is to read the introduction written at the time of publication.

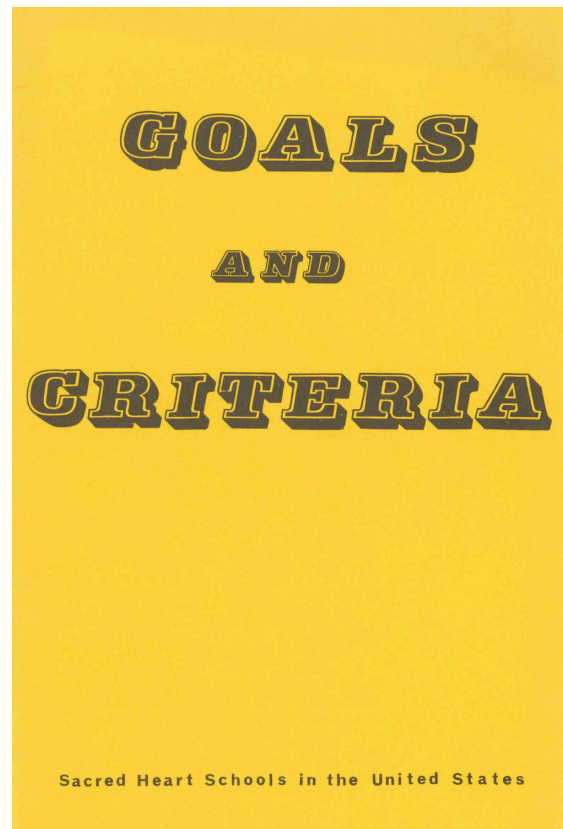
1975

This edition attempted to capture the spirit of Sacred Heart education in light of both history and current social realities. Faced with the question: *What makes a school a Sacred Heart School?* the RSCJ drew upon the Society's documents as well as working papers developed by the heads of school. The result was what was described as a "paper" with the framework for five goals and accompanying criteria. The criteria were seen then, as they are today, as indicators that the Goals are being lived. From the very beginning, the Goals and Criteria were seen as the "the *sin qua non* for this inquiry for every school that belongs to the Sacred Heart network." (Preamble, 1975 *Goals and Criteria*)

In many ways this first articulation of the *Goals and Criteria* demonstrates the seriousness of purpose with which RSCJ had always worked to ensure both clarity of vision and effectiveness of pedagogical practices within Sacred Heart education. All

were convinced that “...values taken for granted or left unarticulated can become inoperative.” (Preamble, 1975 *Goals and Criteria*) To be true to Sophie and the Society, people believed the time was right to articulate the mission of Sacred Heart education.

The 1975 edition laid the foundation for the Network. A shared mission so clearly defined helped schools see “the strength of belonging to a larger whole, of sharing principles and values, broad purposes, hopes and ambitions.” [The opening talk of Catherine Collins, RSCJ, at the Stuart Conference](#) provides an excellent insight into what inspired those who first drafted the *Goals and Criteria*.



[View the 1975 Goals and Criteria](#)

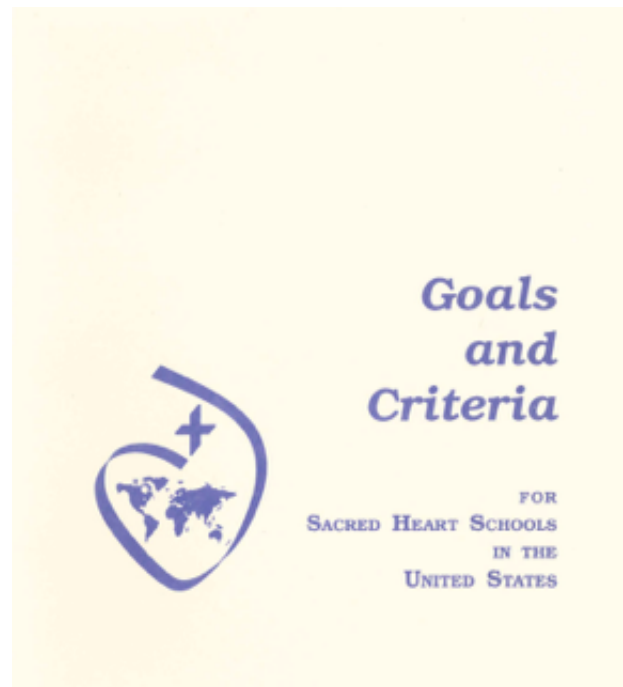
1990

This edition reflects the extraordinary energy that emerged during the initial fifteen years of living the *1975 Goals and Criteria*. The growing number of Educators of the Sacred Heart, the transition from advisory boards to boards of trustees, the establishment of the Network with committees and programs, the first National Trustees Conference, the creation of Network Commission on Goals (NCOG), later Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG) – all demonstrate the energy created by the close collaboration of RSCJ and lay people who shared a profound appreciation of Sophie’s vision as articulated in the *Goals and Criteria*. The sharing of responsibility for the legal, financial, and educational life of the schools became normative.

The changes in the world situation necessitated a re-visioning of the *Goals and Criteria*. “*The 1990 Goals and Criteria express the values, the tensions, and the hopes of the Sacred Heart tradition, sharpened to meet the needs of a rapidly changing*

world.” (Introduction to the 1990 Goals and Criteria)

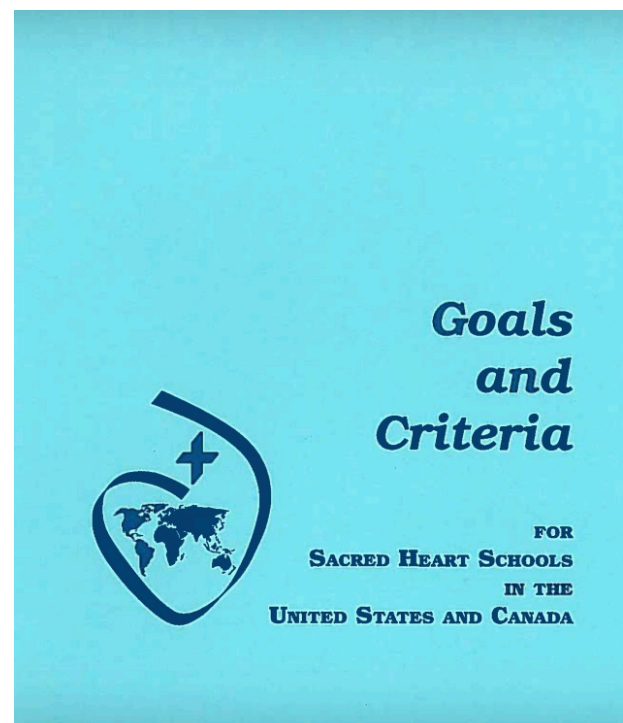
This revision represented a year of work on the part of the school communities and the input of the RSCJ communities. Once again, the articulation of mission reflects respect for tradition and commitment to the future. *“The 1990 Goals...will succeed in energizing our mission only in so far as we take bold steps to interpret our local reality and dare to present God’s love as a healing and empowering gift.”*(Introduction to the 1990 Goals and Criteria)



[View the 1990 Goals and Criteria](#)

2005

This edition was conceived in a post 9/11 world, in which globalization and technology had effected and were still effecting significant social change. The institutional Church was fractured. The 2005 Goals and Criteria document is the fruit of an eighteen-month spirited consultation among the constituencies, all the Network Schools, and all the RSCJ communities. Facilitated by the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals, the edition demonstrates Sacred Heart educators’ recognition that a deep understanding of global citizenship as an honor and a responsibility is essential. The re-visioning process reinforced the sense that, more than ever, students must develop skills such



as critical consciousness, while developing compassionate hearts and skills for peacemaking and reconciliation.

The same urgency to ensure that Sacred Heart education simultaneously reflects Sophie's vision and the spirit of the Society, while responding to the realities of the current moment, inspired all engaged in this re-visioning process. *"The passionate conversations engendered by the process of refocusing and rearticulating our values as Sacred Heart educators provided all with a renewed appreciation of commitment to our educational mission and ways to live it in today's world."* (Paraphrasing page 4, Introduction, 2005 *Goals and Criteria*)

[View the 2005 Goals and Criteria](#)

"It seems to be that the five goals which have shaped our educational vision are really five ways of naming the divine and thus five ways of being gradually transformed into that same divine image: For Mystery is the name of God and lively faith is the path to Mystery. Truth is the name of God and rigorous intellectual discipline is the path to Truth. Compassion is the name of God and mutual service in love is the path to compassion. Community is the name of God (sometimes we say Trinity) and large-heartedness is the path to communion. Freedom is the name of God and acceptance of self and the other is the path to freedom."

-Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ, from ["A Homily in Celebration of the Goals and Criteria for Sacred Heart Schools in the United States"](#), 2005

The Prophetic Role of the *Goals and Criteria*

From the very beginning the *Goals and Criteria* has served as a covenant among

Sacred Heart educators on behalf of young people for the sake of building a world reflective of Christ's attitudes. Sacred Heart educators aspire to form students who will be the best for the world. The idea has been to see the *Goals and Criteria* providing a "prophetic orientation that leads us to hope, a hope that believes in the goodness of each individual, a hope that believes in the goodness of humanity, a hope that believes in and trusts the love of the Heart of God." To claim such hope is a prophetic act.

In her [homily at the time of the blessing](#) of the 2005 edition of the *Goals and Criteria*, Sr. Kathleen Hughes as provincial explained that the *Goals and Criteria* can be "...a prophetic statement only when its content is probed and deepened by each of us and when its directions shape our own lives and our decision-making." (Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ, 2005) Her words echo those of Sr. Collins who addressed a national gathering: in 1979: "This collective vision (*Goals and Criteria*) is a vision of human life, the world and the Kingdom of God. This beautiful expression of our tradition and heritage presses us forward." As educators we ... "call forth the young, in truth, integrity, wholeness, justice, and in the power of love. And it is especially important that we who are here reflect on that, because in the last analysis, we educate by who we are, and by the structures and the processes we established for learning." (Catherine Collins, RSCJ, 1979)

This Moment of Re-Visioning

We are now invited as partners in the mission of Sacred Heart education to re-vision the *Goals and Criteria*. Why are trustees so important to this process? Trustees play a significant role in shaping the culture of Sacred Heart schools through their leadership, decision-making, and policy setting. The work of boards has a significant impact on our capacity to ensure the enduring essence of a Sacred Heart school. The leadership provided by the board supports Sacred Heart educators in forming young people on a path towards transformation and hope by providing an effective education and the formation of character.

As trustees re-read the criteria under each goal prayerfully with a view towards the future, let them remember that we are looking towards tomorrow. Keeping in mind that the 2020 edition of the *Goals and Criteria* will serve students living in the world of 2035 and beyond, we ask what should be included in the criteria to express effectively the mission for students, families, and educators over the next fifteen years? What wording of the criteria supports your daily work with the mission? What wording encourages your personal engagement with the mission? What language strengthens your understanding of Sacred Heart? How might trustee engagement in this re-visioning process ensure the vitality of mission for the generations of students who will one day be in our schools?

RESOURCES

The following resources are referenced and linked in the above article:

[Catherine Collins, RSCJ: Keynote at 1974 Stuart Conference](#)

[Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ: 2005 Homily](#)

[Catherine Baxter, RSCJ: The Fruit of a 200-Year Tradition](#)

[Catherine Collins, RSCJ: Network of Sacred Heart Schools -- Text and Context](#)

Re-Visioning Process

As you know from the letter of the Provincial Team of December 12, 2018 to the Educators and Religious of the Sacred Heart, the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG) has been asked to design the process for the re-visioning of the criteria for the 2020 edition of the *Goals and Criteria*. In that letter the Provincial Team reminded us that we live in a very different world from the one of 2005 when our present document was written. We invite you to re-read the Team's letter linked below and Ann Taylor, RSCJ's letter which outlines the Re-Visioning Process, which will run from

January 2019 through June 2020.

[Letter from Ann Taylor, RSCJ](#)

[Letter from Provincial Team](#)

[Re-Visioning Timeline](#)

[Personal Reflection Form](#)

ON THE WEB

January Issue of *At the Core*

Our new bi-monthly Education to Mission e-magazine! We hope that *At The Core* promotes thoughtful dialogue and discernment about the evolving mission of Sacred Heart education among and within our 24 school communities across the Network. Some of the highlights in our fourth issue include: Philosophy of Sacred Heart Education; What are some of the timeless Sacred Heart pedagogical practices? and Global Perspectives on the Principles of Sacred Heart Education. We will post each current issue on the trustee portal. If you're prefer to receive a copy in your in-box, sign-up for our mailing list.

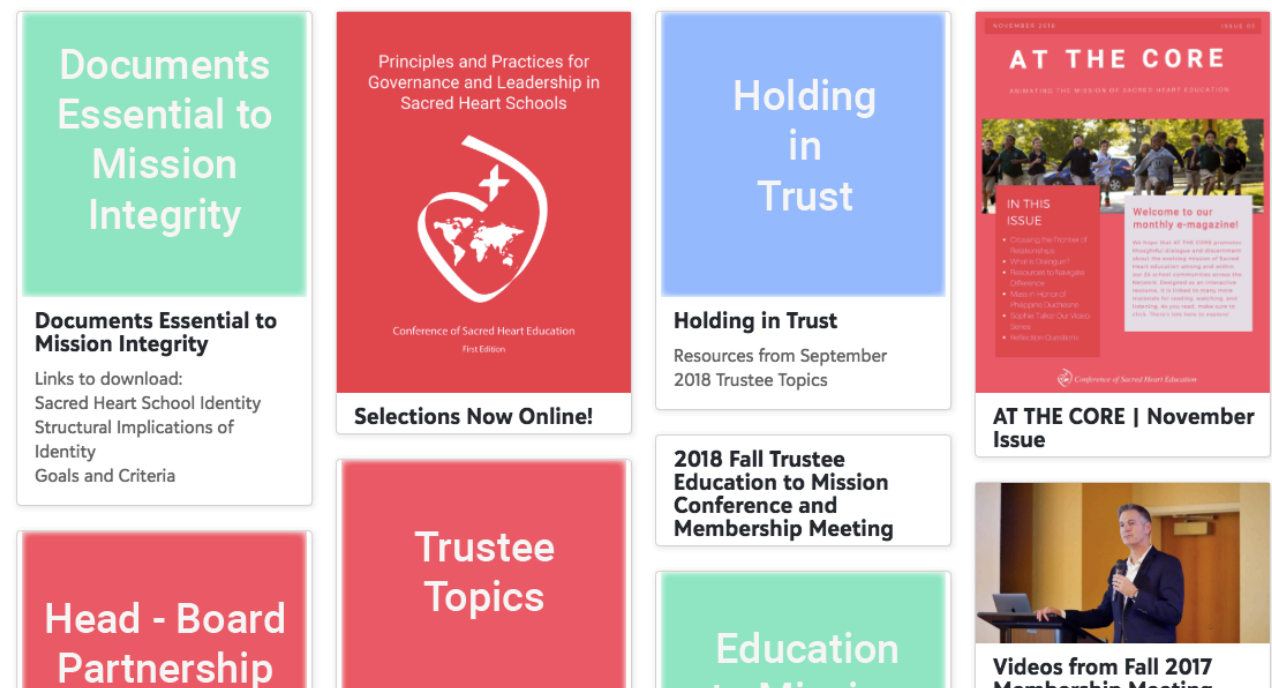
[View January Issue](#)



[Sign-up to receive *At the Core*](#)

How to Access Your Account

Each trustee has her or his own personal account to log-in to the trustee portal of our site sacredheartusc.education. Here you can view resources, including all former issues of *Trustee Topics* and engage with other trustees. To get started, all you need to do is log-in! We've created a short video with step by step instructions showing you how you can engage with all that our new site has to offer.



[Watch "Trustee Tour" video](#)

[Log-in to site](#)

Trustee Resource Board

We hope you will visit our new Trustee Resource Board to view and use an array of materials curated solely for trustees. For example, we've posted all past issues of

Trustee Topics, education to mission resources, materials from past trustee conferences, prayers, videos and much more!

[Visit Trustee Resource Board](#)

Our next Trustee Topics will be sent to you in April. If there are topics you'd like us to cover in our newsletters, we welcome them.

Conference of Sacred Heart Education

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