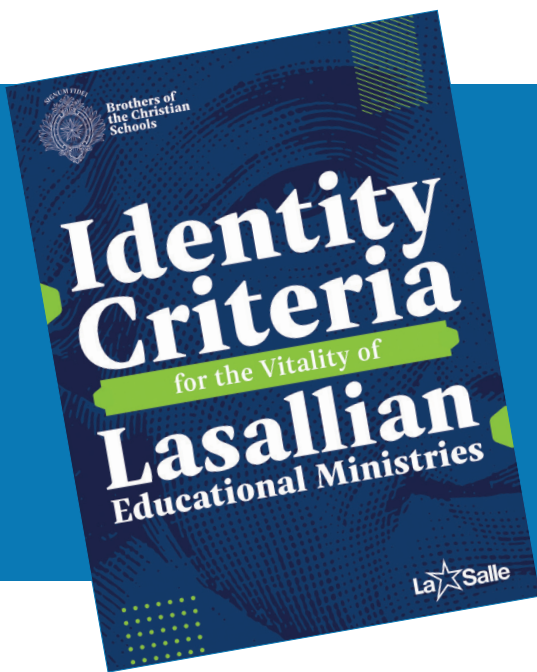


Exploring Lasallian documents.

Uncovering Lasallian research.

Sparking engagement to build a deeper understanding of mission and community.



Lasallian Essentials, a recurring feature in *De La Salle Today*, focuses on bringing Lasallian documents to life. This issue highlights *Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries*, a publication of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools that focuses on ensuring the vitality of the shared commitment of Lasallians. Published in November 2020, the document highlights pedagogical principles to distinguish the characteristics of Lasallian education.

Visit [www.Lasallian.info/LasallianEssentials](http://www.Lasallian.info/LasallianEssentials) to get a printable version of this section. You will also find the Lasallian Essentials on the *Declaration* and *The Pilgrim's Handbook*, both mentioned in this issue's feature.

# Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries

By Brother Néstor Anaya, FSC



Inspired by the example of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, committed Brothers and Lasallian Partners serve in ministries throughout the world responding to the needs of today and uniting as One La Salle. Lasallian ministries have certain characteristics that distinguish them from other educational institutions. These characteristics have been the subject of several documents published recently by the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to support the Lasallian identity.

The 45th General Chapter (2014), in its proposition 13, called for the creation of “a series of criteria that help to strengthen the degree of belonging of an educational work in the Lasallian network” that would ensure the vitality of the shared commitment of Lasallians.<sup>1</sup> In response to this proposition, the International Council for Association and the Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL) published *Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries* in 2020.

The Identity Criteria are pedagogical principles that make it possible to distinguish the characteristics of Lasallian education, as well as offer guidance on how to live them out. They aim to guarantee fidelity to the founding charism and ensure the vitality of the

shared commitment of Lasallians so that “the school runs well.”<sup>2</sup> This can be done by responding effectively to the needs of children and young people through committed educators, an efficient school organization based on Gospel values and sound holistic formation.

The criteria draw upon guidelines given by the 45th General Chapter and the experience of several Districts that use similar criteria, along with published works by Brothers who have studied characteristics of the Lasallian pedagogical style.

Other propositions and initiatives complement the effort to create criteria. This is why *Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries* should be understood as part of a unified set of documents formed with the *Declaration on the Lasallian Educational Mission*, along with guidelines for formation in *Lasallian Formation for Mission: The Pilgrim’s Handbook* and guidelines on association in *A Conversation for the Lasallian Family: Deepening our Identity*. Together, these documents and guidelines seek to foster the mission, starting with committed educators associated in educational communities.

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Brother Néstor Anaya, FSC, is Secretary for the Lasallian Educational Mission. He served on the editorial team for the creation of *Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries*. Brother Néstor represents the Institute as one of the vice presidents of BICE (the International Catholic Child Bureau) and, under Pope Francis, is working with and promoting the Global Education Compact with the Vatican Dicastery on Education.

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## Objectives

The Identity Criteria have two objectives:

1. to recognize the development of Lasallian identity and its vitality in educational centers, and
2. to favor continuous plans for improvement in educational ministries regarding Lasallian identity and its vitality.

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## Criteria and Categories

The Identity Criteria are organized by categories that respond to the purposes and ways of carrying out education. Although the material offers a form of application and criteria, each

educational ministry, Sector, District or Region can adapt the criteria, expressions and methodology to local circumstances.

*Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries* contains a framework in which reference is made to the origins of the Institute; to the current network of Lasallian educational ministries; to the essential values of faith, community and service; to the vision of the committed educator; and to pedagogy. It includes 27 criteria organized into six categories: response to needs; the educational community; accompaniment; historical, foundational support; a culture of quality; and strategic management.<sup>3</sup>

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## Possible Uses

Each category brings together a number of themes that, when viewed in depth, may inspire opportunities to share the results of the ministry's assessment on their Lasallian identity by using the themes and results to:

1. provide reflections,
2. create a set of seminars, or
3. infuse as topics for a Lasallian formation program.

In this way, these themes, accompanied by relevant activities and dynamics, may become very significant Lasallian educational and formation experiences.

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## Lasallian Assessment

In addition to defining the Identity Criteria, the document offers two models to assess the Lasallian identity and its vitality in ministries with the goal of promoting the development of the Lasallian identity in ministries. One model is an in-person assessment, while the other is a virtual assessment.

The in-person assessment includes one part to be completed privately and one to be done in a group. First, individuals consider how well the criteria are being lived out in their ministry and rate each one at the level at which it is being fulfilled (on a scale from 1-4). The results are shared and discussed in a group setting, including which criteria should be improved and how.

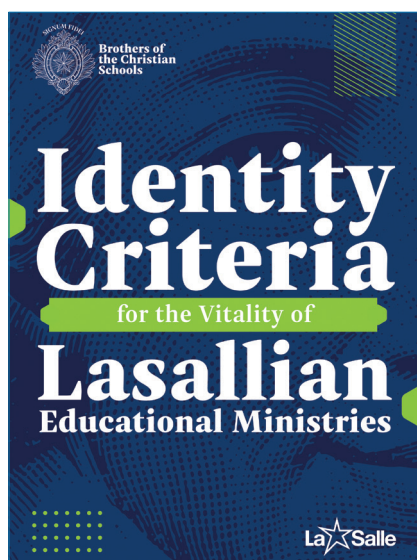
The assessment ends by forming a committee tasked with developing an improvement plan. The virtual assessment takes participants through the same process of evaluating the criteria through an online evaluation instrument provided by the Secretariat for Association and Mission. The online assessment can be completed at the ministry or at home.

Ministries in all five Regions of the Institute have used these assessments, whether the ministries are in urban, semi-urban or rural environments, in primary, secondary and tertiary educational centers, in educational communities where there are Brothers and in others where there are no longer Brothers, and in small and large

schools, so it is hoped that the document will be of great help.

The experience has been very positive using both models, highlighting some of the benefits as:

1. the possibility of strengthening a culture of continuously improving Lasallian identity and vitality,
2. the vigilance of each ministry to care for the Lasallian heritage,
3. flexibility to adapt expressions of the mission,
4. the opportunity to incorporate elements (criteria) that are not currently present in the ministry, and
5. the simplicity and ease of using the material.



## More Ways to Use the Identity Criteria in Ministries

1. Offer the criteria as an introduction to the Lasallian mission for new staff members who join an educational community.
2. Design a professional development course in Lasallian pedagogy using the criteria as a thematic reference.
3. Write essays that deepen the themes.
4. Provide short reflections to students or as topics for study, including prayer and vocational discernment.
5. Be a reference in the implementation of strategic plans and Lasallian pedagogy.

## For Reflection and Discussion

1. In your work as an educator, which Identity Criteria do you live? How could you develop them individually or as a group?
2. In your educational community, have you reviewed how your Lasallian identity is lived and to what extent it is being developed? If so, what were the results, and what has been done subsequently?
3. Based on your experience, what would be the essential Lasallian Identity Criteria to be lived in an educational ministry?

**“The COVID-19 pandemic, financial crisis and other situations urge us to reiterate our faith in the transforming power of education, favoring new strategies to evangelize and to promote solidarity, peace and justice, just like the efforts of great Lasallians who preceded us, starting from the deep roots we have inherited.”**

*Brother Néstor Anaya, FSC*

### Endnotes

1. Brothers of the Christian Schools. *Documents of the 45th General Chapter*. Rome, Italy: November 2014, p. 22.
2. Brothers of the Christian Schools. *Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries*. Rome, Italy: 2020, p. 11.
3. The work carried out by Brother Léon Lauraire, FSC, helps to deepen the understanding of these topics, mainly: “The Conduct of Schools: Pedagogical approach.” *Cahiers lasalliens* 62. Rome, Italy: 2006; “Conduct of Schools. An overall plan of human and Christian education.” *MEL Bulletin* 12. Rome, Italy: 2004; and “The challenge of Fraternity. A Reflection and Personal Testimony.” *MEL Bulletins* 56. Rome, Italy: 2021.