

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

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SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	42	26	68
K	31	16	47
1	22	19	41
2	25	24	49
3	28	28	56
4	24	25	49
5	30	23	53
6	30	26	56
7	27	17	44
8	19	23	42
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			505

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
3 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
93 % White
1 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 2%
 This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	7
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	6
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	13
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	538
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%
 Total number of ELL students in the school: 0
 Number of non-English languages represented: 0
 Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
 Total number of students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 8%
 Total number of students served: 40

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>7</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>21</u>	<u>4</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>
Total number	<u>30</u>	<u>33</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

22:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____ %

Enrolled in a community college _____ %

Enrolled in vocational training _____ %

Found employment _____ %

Military service _____ %

Other _____ %

Total _____ **0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

Immaculate Conception School (ICS) opened its doors eleven years ago, thanks to the tireless efforts of a group of parishioners who desperately wanted a Catholic School in rural Hunterdon County, New Jersey. In the fall of 2001, ICS began serving Preschool to Fourth grade students in what is now the Early Education Building. In the fall of 2002, the new school building opened and now serves approximately 500 students in preschool through grade eight.

The school's mission states "*Immaculate Conception School exists as a gift to God's children, to prepare them to live a life with Jesus the Good Shepherd as their teacher and friend. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of Mary, the school seeks to foster in each student spiritual growth, academic excellence and moral integrity.*" Because ICS is the only Catholic School within a twenty mile radius, it serves children from several counties and many different school districts. Hunterdon County is a former farm community that has been transformed into a bedroom community for corporate commuters, mostly professionals. The local public schools offer excellent academic programs. Consequently, parents who pay tuition, in addition to the religious formation of their children, expect an equally excellent academic program at this non-public school. ICS teachers work hard to give the students the best possible education. Through many professional and spiritual development opportunities, ICS teachers continue to enhance their professional practice.

Building community is a foundational concept at ICS. The teachers and staff use a Responsive Classroom approach in working toward the mission. (www.responsiveclassroom.org) This approach, based on the Golden Rule, helps students to develop respect for themselves, respect for others, and respect for their school and community. Each lower grade class has a buddy-class of older students who work with them as mentors and friends. Faith Families, cross-grade level groups of K-8 students, meet monthly to perform a spiritual or service activity. These "family groups" stay together, year after year. Serving others is another foundational concept. In 2011, the school was awarded the "New Jersey Governor's Jefferson Award" for volunteerism. Students are actively involved in a variety of service projects each year, including enormous food collections for the local pantry, penny wars to support a variety of charities, pet products collections for the local animal shelter, diaper collections for United Way, and used coat and shoe collections for the needy. Students have made placemats for local nursing homes, cards for the troops, and jewelry to sell for Habitat for Humanity. Currently Hurricane Sandy relief efforts are underway. Seventh and eighth grade students volunteer to give up recess time to read with the first and second grade students as their "Reading Buddies".

The Arts are an equally important part of the program. In addition to general music classes, students have opportunities to participate in vocal and instrumental music as well as theater productions. Music students compete at Music in the Parks, bringing home superior ratings, but even more importantly, being awarded the "Esprit d'Corps" award twice. The theater program performs an outstanding musical each year that attracts the local community. The Spring Festival of the Arts is a well attended community event that highlights students' abilities in the visual and performing arts. Eighth grade students present their culminating project, an independent study, which incorporates writing with their art work.

The Library is filled with trophies and plaques won by ICS teams. The school's Basketball and Cheerleading program, has won many tournaments and competitions in the tri-state area. This year, Interscholastic Cross Country was added, giving students their first opportunity to compete against the local public schools. ICS teams of fifth and sixth graders compete every year at the county Reading Olympics competition, the only non-public school to do so. Many first place awards have been secured.

ICS is the only Catholic school in the State of New Jersey that participates in Destination Imagination. Several teams have won at the state level and gone on to compete globally at the University of Tennessee, where two teams placed in the top five. Recently, one team won the “Spirit of D.I.” award at the global competition, for their fund raising efforts to purchase malaria nets through the United Nations program. Only two of these awards were given globally.

The school has a wonderful support system with a strong connection to the parish. The Pastor or the associate pastor are present most mornings as the children arrive, greeting them and providing a strong spiritual presence. Students participate in parish activities and during Catholic Schools Week, lead the Sunday Liturgy. Parishioners serve on the advisory committees and some volunteer in the school. Parents are actively involved in many ways. Their fund raising efforts help to keep the school solvent and tuition reasonable.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A. The Terra Nova is administered to second through eighth grade students each spring. Second graders take Reading, Language, Math, Word Analysis and Spelling. Third graders take Reading, Language and Math, and fourth through eighth graders take Reading, Language, Math, Science and Social Studies. Students consistently score in the 70th to 80th percentile or above. Yet, higher scores are always strived for. The Diocese of Metuchen uses the 70th percentile as the standard of proficiency, so that is the targeted minimum level of performance for ICS students. In addition to the Median National Percentile scores, the Standard Scores for each grade level are closely examined. An increase of eleven points on the Standard Score is considered a normal grade level increase. When a grade level does not achieve that minimum increase, the staff works together to find out why. Sometimes, the students had such a significant increase the previous year that the next year's score might level out. Other times, the curriculum materials are lacking or the program used does not get to that portion of the curriculum in time for the students to master it before being tested. So, adjustments need to be made.

In addition to the Terra Nova, fourth and seventh grade students take a standardized writing test called Writing Roadmap. This program is based on the Six Traits of Writing. Students work with the program all year and then do a timed writing sample in the spring. Scores are reported based on a six point rubric with four considered an average score. Adjusting writing instruction to a Six Traits of Writing format, has impacted the students' writing scores with many more fourth and seventh graders receiving a score of five or above (on a six point scale) on their final writing sample. 295

B. In reviewing standardized test scores for the last five years, one finds stable scores ranging from the mid 70th percentile to the low 90th percentile in both Reading and Mathematics, with Mathematics scores being slightly higher than Reading scores. Stable scores are present, both as one group of students moves to the next grade and also from year to year in the same grade. It is noted that scores were slightly lower after the move to the newer format of the Terra Nova, in the 2008-2009 school year. This was especially true for fourth grade math where the same group of students (for the most part) scored in the 85th percentile in 2008 but only in the 67th percentile in 2009. At that time, it was observed that the fourth grade test format was quite different, with less multiple choice questions and much more writing involved in the testing format than in the Terra Nova 2.

In reviewing the scale scores for these same years, it is recognized that the minimum eleven point increase expected by the Diocese is absent for four grades in 2009, the first year that the Terra Nova 3 was administered. This caused the realization that ICS students needed to be better prepared for the new testing format. More emphasis is now placed on reading across the subject areas. Students are having more success reading questions and understanding what is being asked and in reading and solving word problems in mathematics. Writing instruction is now focused on writing clear, concise answers to questions as well as writing essays. Study skills and general test-taking strategies have also been added to the curriculum as well as the computer program, Study Island, which provides skill reinforcement as well as testing practice. Now, after three years with students taking the newer test format, the scores are again at an acceptable level because the students are now better prepared to take the Terra Nova 3.

In addition to looking at the grade level scores, individual class scores are carefully examined, noting any large discrepancies. Grade level teachers use a team approach to planning and executing the curriculum, so only minimum differences are found between the two classes on a grade level.

Even more importantly, the scores of each sub test in a curriculum area are closely examined. Any sub-test below the 70th percentile is considered a target area for improvement. In the past few years, considerable effort has been focused on improving the scores on the reading comprehension sub-tests,

especially in the third through fifth grades. In fact, the whole-school three year goal is to improve the reading comprehension scores of our student body so that 90% of our students score in the 70th percentile or above.

Most ICS students do quite well on the standardized tests. There are a small number of students, some classified with specific learning disabilities, who score lower than the rest of the students in a particular grade level. These students are provided with Supplemental Instruction, Basic Skills Instruction and Homework Club (an after-school tutoring opportunity.) The purpose of this additional instruction is to help these students to gain skills that may be lacking. Although improving their test scores is not the primary purpose of this additional instruction, it often has that effect as well.

2. Using Assessment Results:

When Terra Nova scores arrive, usually in late May, reports are sorted by grade level and by class. The first task is to chart grade level scores, looking for sub-tests where the grade level is scoring below the 70th percentile or the Standard Score does not meet the minimum eleven point increase. These areas are then targeted by the Curriculum Coordinator in collaboration with the teachers. Curriculum and materials are reviewed to ensure that no gaps exist. Supplemental materials are added as needed. Making changes in the timing of when a particular unit is taught has improved scores. In addition, as the testing moved to the Terra Nova 3, which has a different format from the Terra Nova 2, some basic test preparation materials were added. Teaching to the test is not done in any grade, but students do best when they know how to read questions and are comfortable with the format they are expected to follow. Last year, Study Island, an internet based program in Language Arts and Mathematics was added for second through eighth grade students. Students may use Study Island at school and at home.

Individual student scores are also reviewed and they are shared with the current and following year's teachers, who, together, formulate an action plan for improving academic success. As previously stated, the current school goal is to improve our Reading Comprehension scores so that 90% of our students score in the 70th percentile or higher. In order to meet this goal, all students who are not meeting that standard must be carefully followed and a remediation plan must be put into place. According to federal guidelines, students who score below the 50th percentile in reading, language or mathematics are eligible to receive compensatory education instruction. A teacher who is responsible for this instruction is provided by the local public school district. This "Comp Ed" teacher works closely with the classroom teachers to supplement instruction and provide remediation on an individual or small group basis.

There are approximately thirty students who are classified with a learning disability of some kind, as indicated by a discrepancy between their testing scores on the Woodcock Johnson and the WISC. These students receive a period of Supplemental Instruction in addition to any "Comp Ed" time that they are qualified to receive. A careful review of their Terra Nova scores, as well as the formal educational testing done by the Child Study Team, helps to formulate a plan for their remediation as needed.

There are, however, additional students who do not meet either of the above requirements for academic support. Those students, who score between the 50th and 70th percentile could easily "fall through the cracks" and never meet the goal that has been set. Those students are part of a group of children being targeted for additional remediation and skill polishing through the Wednesday Knights program, an extra period per week of small group intervention.

Terra Nova scores are reported to parents in a variety of ways. Each student's score reports are sent home with their final report cards. Individual families are welcomed to make an appointment with the Curriculum Coordinator who also serves as the school's testing coordinator, to review their child's scores and how the school will plan for the child's continued success in the upcoming school year. Terra Nova scores are published on the school's website for current and prospective parents to review. Graphs based on Standard Scores are made for each grade level where they are compared to National and Diocesan

scores, and presented to the Advisory Committees at an open, public meeting.

Although ICS students do well on Standardized Testing it is realized that this is only a snapshot in time of what they are really achieving. Many other forms of assessment are also used, including daily observation, teacher made assessments, benchmark testing, and end of chapter textbook assessments. With the advent of online teacher support materials, teachers are now able to construct and modify textbook assessments.

Each student also has a reading and writing folder containing writing samples and copies of the Developmental Reading Assessment given from Kindergarten through grade five. This folder moves with them from grade to grade, allowing the next year's teacher to see specific work samples and know right where to start instructing.

Students at ICS also keep a portfolio of their work throughout the school year. At the end of the year, they review their portfolios, assessing themselves, and write about areas they have grown and areas they need to improve. Portfolios are shared with parents at a student-led end of year conference.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Collaboration and cooperation are very important parts of professional development in the Diocese of Metuchen and at Immaculate Conception School. The Diocese sometimes offers a Professional Development Day which ICS teachers attend. Subject area meetings are held at the Diocesan Center twice per year. At these meetings, teachers from schools all over the Diocese meet to share ideas, listen to guest speakers, and refine their practice. Because of the adoption of the Common Core Curriculum in Mathematics this year (Language Arts next year), Math Circles are being held at regular intervals for teachers around the Diocese. Last summer, ICS math teachers took a twenty hour online course through ASCD to learn how to implement the Common Core. This implementation was also the subject of the fall professional development day. At the first math circle, it was edifying to watch ICS teachers take the lead in discussing this new implementation and showing their comfort level with a subject that many are finding difficult.

A few years ago, the Diocese began encouraging each school to develop a Professional Learning Community (PLC). A team for each school was trained. However, after the training, the ICS team felt less than prepared to embark on this new venture. So, the ICS team met all summer to read and study appropriate materials together. The planning team also attended an ASCD conference given by the DuFour's (who are considered the top experts in PLCs). A video program to train the teachers was then purchased and used for the Fall Professional Development. These materials were shared with other schools. Now in the third year of working together as a PLC, the staff continues to grow and learn together, formulating common goals and sharing their knowledge and expertise.

The local community hosts a group that is a subsidiary of I.R.A. called the Tri-County Reading Council. ICS Language Arts teachers are members of this group which meets several times a year. Local teachers are called upon to make presentations to their colleagues, sharing ways to improve reading instruction. In addition, ICS middle school teachers are members of articulation groups for the various high school feeder programs. Meeting with other eighth grade teachers helps to ensure that ICS students are ready for the rigors of high school.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

There is a special sense of community at ICS. The faculty and staff believe that a partnership with each family is a key to the success of the individual student. Effective communication is a key to forming this partnership. Before the school year begins, each teacher writes a letter of welcome that is posted on the

school website. The principal's weekly letter is posted online. Each teacher has a webpage that is part of the school's larger website. Teachers each have their own laptop which is equipped with email so that they may respond to parent emails quickly and efficiently. The school utilizes the program PowerSchool to electronically post students' grades within a few days of an assignment, quiz or test. In addition, Global Connect is used to notify parents in case of emergency closings or other pertinent information.

Back to School Night is held early in the school year, giving families an opportunity to meet their child's teacher and learn about the program their child will experience. This year, a "Curriculum Night", with an emphasis on the implementation of the Common Core in Math, was added the following week, so that parents could clearly understand what is happening in the classrooms,

Each ICS family is required to give twenty five volunteer hours per year to the school. Volunteers are used in many capacities including directing morning traffic into the school, copying materials for teachers, and managing fund raisers. Volunteers gather food pantry donations and drive them to the appropriate locations, coach basketball, cheerleading, Reading Olympics, and Destination Imagination teams and lead numerous Scout troops. Classroom volunteers are a most important asset to instruction. Volunteers are trained to work with children, helping to answer individual needs, while maintaining confidentiality. Volunteer assistants work with small groups, Readers Theater, and Wednesday Knights groups, Writers Workshop, and Kindergarten International Day. Teachers and parents working collaboratively invest the entire community in the success of the students and the school.

Parents are invited to stay for Morning Gathering or to visit classrooms on various occasions. Each year, during Catholic Schools Week, the school is open for visits from the community at large. On Sunday of that week, teachers are in their classrooms to meet and greet visitors while students serve as tour guides, sharing their love and enthusiasm for their school with prospective families or visitors from the community.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at Immaculate Conception School is rich and challenging. It is based on the New Jersey Core Content Standards and is provided to us by the Diocese of Metuchen. All students have daily instruction in Integrated Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Religion. **Immaculate Conception School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirement.** Seventh and eighth grade students receive instruction in Spanish four periods per week, while Kindergarten through sixth grade students receives Spanish instruction weekly. In addition, students receive weekly instruction in Media/Technology, Art, Music, and Physical Education. After school activities such as French Club, Art Club, Yearbook, Newspaper, Band and Choirs give students additional enrichment opportunities.

Each teacher is required to develop a curriculum map for their particular subject area, which is reviewed and revised each year. All maps are posted on the school network so that teachers may refer to those of other grade levels. These maps are reviewed by and with the Curriculum Coordinator who helps to identify curriculum gaps and redundancies. The curriculum is reviewed on a rotating schedule with Kindergarten-eighth grade subject area teachers meeting to further identify gaps and to adjust as needed. Text books are updated regularly, again on a rotating schedule. Middle school teachers have articulation meetings with the local high schools to ensure continuity of instruction and smooth transitions of our eighth grade graduates.

Teachers at ICS use a variety of teaching styles, teaching strategies, and materials to provide the most effective program for students. The arts of language: reading, writing, listening and speaking, permeate all content areas. All teachers are considered language arts teachers, as it is realized that the attainment of these skills is the foundation for success in all areas. The mathematics program is based on the Common Core State Standards. Using manipulatives from the early grades forward helps students to understand concepts in a concrete way before they attempt to apply those concepts at a symbolic level. Problem solving is not confined to math class but is integrated into other subject areas as well. Science and Social Studies instruction begins in Preschool. Fifth- eighth grade science students are blessed to have a state of the art science lab in which to study. Seventh grade students participate in the school science fair as well as the Science Fair sponsored by a local public high school.

As a Catholic School, religious formation is a main focus. Although the teaching of religion is a subject in the school, spiritual development and moral upbringing are integral to everything. While non-Catholic students are welcome to attend ICS, all students must study religion and attend Mass and prayer services as part of the general curriculum.

Technology is widely used to enhance the curriculum, leading to the constant challenge of funding the efforts to stay current. In addition to receiving instruction in the use of computers, classroom teachers provide many opportunities for students to apply their skills through the use of classroom computers, software, the Internet, cameras, and SMART Boards. In addition to four or five personal computers in each classroom, ICS has a full computer lab of Macintosh computers, and two portable carts, one of Macintosh laptops and one of I Pads, each with enough for an individual class to use. All classrooms are equipped with a Smart Board and most also have voice enhancement systems. An additional cart of I Pads is budgeted for purchase next year.

2. Reading/English:

ICS uses an integrated language arts approach to reading instruction with reading and writing instruction integrated into the other subject areas. Specific reading instruction is done via a literature-based program.

Poetry, fiction and non-fiction trade books and novels are used daily for reading instruction because it is believed that students learn better when they are engaged and that literature provides a more authentic basis for this learning. Literature is so much richer and vocabulary is much more varied than the stories or excerpts of stories that are published in Literature-based reading anthologies. ICS teachers work very hard to provide students with authentic opportunities to respond to literature in writing and speaking. A basic tenant of instruction is that whatever is taken in through reading, viewing or listening, must be expressed through writing or speaking.

Flexible grouping is the foundation for reading instruction in the earlier grades. Guided reading groups provide the instruction needed on different levels. The Developmental Reading Assessment is used, beginning in Kindergarten, to target instruction to an individual student's ability level and needs. Classroom book "clubs" give students an opportunity to further develop reading strategies and comprehension skills. Teachers use a mini-lesson to target a particular strategy to use while reading and then help the students to implement that strategy in their own reading that day. Students are not limited to grade level materials. It is not uncommon to find students who read one, two, or more grade levels above their current grade. Classrooms are equipped with varying levels of materials and teachers also share books between grade levels, if needed.

Many techniques are used to improve fluency. Readers Theater is a favorite at all grade levels. Younger students love to turn their book into a play to perform for other students. Older students dramatize Romeo and Juliet and other Shakespeare favorites. Younger students particularly love when their seventh and eighth grade reading buddies come to visit. They pick a favorite story to read to their "reading buddy", promoting automaticity and fluency at every ability level, while developing leadership skills in the older students.

Reading self selected books at home is an important part of the program. Students are required to keep daily book logs and many grades use book talks or book reports as ways of sharing this reading. Students frequently read between 5,000 and 10,000 minutes recreationally during a given school year.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics program at ICS is based on the Common Core State Standards. Kindergarten-eighth grade students use the latest Glencoe/Macmillian-McGraw Hill Common Core textbooks. With the online component, teachers are able to access text materials on the SMART Board and use all the technological resources available. Students can also access these textbooks remotely. Many supplemental materials are also used to reach the greatest number of students at their differentiated learning levels. In Kindergarten – second grade, classroom teachers use whole class and small group instruction, using the "math wall" to integrate mathematics instruction into daily activities. In third and fourth grades, students are pre-tested at the beginning of each unit and grouped by ability, with both teachers in a grade level working with students from both classes. And, in fifth through eighth grades, there are five levels of instruction offered to students. Math groups are deliberately kept very small so that students can receive instruction at their own level. Instruction includes grade level instruction with support, on grade level instruction, above grade level instruction, and advanced instruction with enrichment.

Math instruction takes the form of direct instruction, guided discovery, and independent study. At ICS, it is believed that students need to commit math facts to memory. Beginning with the early grades, children participate in games and timed activities that promote math fact fluency and computational fluency.

An important part of mathematics instruction is the development of a mathematics vocabulary. Pre Kindergarten through second grade students gain an informal sense of "math language while third-eighth grade students use this vocabulary in meaningful context so that by eighth grade, students have an extensive math language vocabulary.

Problem solving is the most important part of math instruction. Students are given formal and informal problem solving experiences through the use of materials. Younger students participate in “Math Alive” activities – hands on problem solving experiences, while older students use practical applications which allow them to develop an awareness and understanding of learned math concepts. Because reading and writing are such important parts of problem solving, math teachers teach reading strategies to help students analyze a word problem. Students keep math journals to record their problem solving attempts and to meet identified objectives.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The teaching of religion is the foundation of all other instruction. Formal religious instruction begins in preschool and continues through grade eight. Second and eighth grade students also experience sacramental preparation.

Religious artifacts are prominent in all parts of the building. A statue of Mary Immaculate stands in front of the entrance and a beautiful statue of Mary and the Children of the World graces the office. Each classroom is adorned with a crucifix and a statue of the Blessed Mother, and a prayer corner that the children are encouraged to visit. The stairwells are decorated with tile portraits of the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph that former seventh and eighth grade students created in their art classes.

On Monday mornings, faculty and administration gather to begin the week with prayer. Students and teachers gather each morning in the school’s multi-purpose room for prayer, led by the principal. Children take turns leading the intercessory prayers. One of the Beatitudes is selected for the school’s religious theme each year. Each month a different grade level helps everyone to recite the Beatitude. That is followed with a short presentation on the life of a special saint and a virtue that all will work to emulate.

Students have daily instruction in religion as well as in family life. The entire school community attends Mass together once a month. This Mass is completely led by the children who do the readings, sing in the choir, and present the gifts. All students are prepared to sing at Mass by learning the liturgical music as part of their weekly music instruction. Additionally, each grade level attends morning Mass at least one other time during the month. There are special liturgies and prayer services for each holiday and Holy Day.

Students are encouraged to live their faith through many spiritual and service activities. The school entryway is often decorated with the product of these activities. Every day, children excitedly run to the bulletin board where the Food Pantry donation graph is displayed to see if their class might be winning the monthly competition. In November, students create chains with their prayers of Thanksgiving. In December, a large evergreen becomes the Jesse Tree with student made decorations. Many 6-8 grade students participate in the parish Living Nativity. In February, posters that depict Jesus love for all and ways students and teachers can share that love are proudly displayed.

5. Instructional Methods:

Differentiated Instruction is the cornerstone of the academic program. Teachers at Immaculate Conception School must be able to clearly differentiate instruction at all levels as a condition of employment. Plan books are reviewed by the principal on Monday mornings. Differentiated lessons are highlighted to clearly delineate them from other lessons.

Enrichment and academic support are offered at all levels. Preschool through second grade classes have a teacher and a teaching assistant in each classroom, making individual and small group instruction possible. On a rotating schedule, teaching assistants from the primary classrooms spend an afternoon a week in the third grade, assisting teachers in providing additional small group support. Primary teachers

and teaching assistants have been trained in Sonday, an Orton-Gillingham based program that helps struggling students develop their phonemic and phonics skills.

ICS has a cadre of dedicated volunteers who help on a daily basis. An effort was made to recruit former and retired teachers through the parish. These professionals share their time and talent with students in yet another opportunity for individual or small group instruction.

Technology is also an important part of this differentiation of instruction. Study Island was purchased for second through eighth grade students. Students use Study Island both in the classrooms and as part of homework to refine their reading, writing and math skills. Teachers also use many websites for math games, facts practice, research, and additional skill refinement.

The local school district provides a Child Study Team and a Supplemental/Basic Skills Instructor. There are approximately forty students who receive academic or speech services from the Child Study Team. In addition, numerous students receive Basic Skills Instruction.

One of the greatest efforts at meeting students' individual needs has been a new program implemented last year. It is called Wednesday Knights (after the school mascot.) Every Wednesday, each period is reduced by five minutes and a ninth period is then added to the school day. Students then meet in smaller groups for enrichment or remediation, based on their grade level team's assessment of their needs. The entire teaching staff, special area teachers and the volunteer teachers that have been recruited, work with students.

6. Professional Development:

The Diocese of Metuchen requires each of its schools to submit a Professional Development Plan for each academic year. This plan is required to support the yearly academic and spiritual goals of the school. Teachers at ICS have many opportunities for professional development both on and offsite. Each teacher is permitted to attend one professional development workshop a year, which is paid for by the school. In addition, the Diocese offers numerous opportunities for professional and spiritual development that teachers may attend at no cost to them. On site, each teacher attends monthly faculty meetings followed by one hour of professional development, in addition to two professional development and two spiritual development days per year. Workshops on varieties of subjects such as technology, formative assessment, reading comprehension, writing, and Responsive Classroom have been offered on these days. Many teachers also attend summer institutes and training events.

Two years ago, a team from ICS was trained in the formation of a Professional Learning Community. Following that, the team trained the rest of the faculty using ASCD's Professional Development series on PLCs. Three year goals were developed and strategies to reach those goals were formulated.

Three professional learning communities were formed within the larger faculty community. These include a preschool-grade two group, a grades three and four group, and a grades five through eight group. Special area teachers are divided among the groups. Each subgroup meets twice a month and the entire faculty meets together once a month. In order to meet the ICS goal to improve the reading comprehension of our students across the grades and across the curriculum, any weaknesses students might have in the skill areas must be remediated.

As a result of these meetings, considerable energy has been focused on remediating individual students in their particular areas of need. A large storage closet was renovated recently into an Academic Support classroom. Teachers are finding time and creative ways to meet with individuals and small groups. It was through Professional Learning Communities that ICS teachers devised the Wednesday Knights program, mentioned above.

7. School Leadership:

The principal of the school is the founding principal of Immaculate Conception School. She has been involved in every aspect of the school's development since before the building was erected. She is assisted by the Curriculum Coordinator, who also serves as Assistant Principal. Both are hands on administrators. Both are actively involved with staff in planning and in professional development. Both are actively involved with students, knowing them all by name, visiting classrooms, and sharing responsibility for cafeteria duty, which allows teachers time to meet with their colleagues as administrators build relationships with the children. Both have an open door policy to staff members and parents. Both the principal and assistant are trained in conflict resolution and actively work with students when the need arises. Discipline is not seen as punishment but rather as an opportunity for students to grow to be well-formed adults with a moral sense of what is right. A positive, logical consequences approach to discipline is used.

The school has two active Advisory Committees and one parent group. The School Advisory Committee is a group of parishioners and parents who work in an advisory capacity with the Principal and the Pastor. The Education Advisory Committee is a group of former educators who work with the Principal and Curriculum Coordinator on educational matters. The Home School Association is a group of parents who function like a PTA. The H.S.A. raises over \$200,000 or fifteen percent annually of the school budget, helping to keep tuition at a reasonable level.

In its eleven years in existence, the school has formulated and executed two Strategic Plans. The committee for each plan was comprised of teachers, parents, students, parishioners, and community members who worked to form strategic goals for the school. In addition, the school was accredited by the Middle States Commission of Schools, which included a self-study and a three year review. The Diocese recently decided to move the accreditation process to AdvancED.

School administrators are personally involved with understanding the academic needs of students. After reviewing the results of standardized testing, the results are presented to each grade level teacher, who carefully monitors students' progress and develops plans for students who are not making adequate progress. The Principal reviews and signs each child's report card before it is sent home, and the Curriculum Coordinator monitors all classified and basic skills students and attends all Child Study meetings.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2012-2013 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$4970</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
12th	Other				
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$6675

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1387

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
1%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	89	76	83	85	85
Number of students tested	49	54	51	50	50
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd Edition 2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	84	77	78	77	84
Number of students tested	49	54	51	50	50
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	80	78	81	67	85
Number of students tested	53	56	50	50	50
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	75	76	70	74	77
Number of students tested	53	56	50	50	50
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	82	83	76	80	86
Number of students tested	54	52	51	52	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	84	74	80	72	79
Number of students tested	54	54	51	52	52
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	85	79	81	81	81
Number of students tested	48	51	54	52	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	86	85	81	78	79
Number of students tested	48	51	54	52	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	85	83	85	90	87
Number of students tested	44	52	46	45	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	81	79	76	84	83
Number of students tested	44	52	46	45	51
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Special Education Students take the same test but in an alternate (small group) setting.					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	87	83	91	85	85
Number of students tested	55	50	46	47	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	84	81	85	83	84
Number of students tested	55	50	46	47	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

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