

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Sharon Garcia  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Saint Francis Xavier School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 145 N Waiola Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City La Grange State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60525-1866

County Cook

Telephone (708) 352-2175 Fax (708) 352-2057

Web site/URL http://www.sfxlg.org/school E-mail aryan@sfxlg.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Jim Rigg E-mail jrigg@archchicago.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Chicago Tel. (312) 534-5200

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Katy Newcomb  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	15	26	41
K	21	21	42
1	14	26	40
2	20	13	33
3	25	31	56
4	20	32	52
5	22	20	42
6	27	30	57
7	24	23	47
8	21	33	54
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	209	255	464

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.5 % Asian
  - 0.2 % Black or African American
  - 6.1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 92 % White
  - 0.2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report 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.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	496
(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

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

33 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2013

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

St. Francis Xavier Parish School provides students with academic excellence centered in Catholic values of prayer, learning and service.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Saint Francis Xavier School is dedicated to fostering and celebrating the academic, social, emotional, and moral growth of each student. What draws new families to our doors and keeps families coming back generation after generation is our ability to successfully educate the whole child. Our goal is to instill in our students an intrinsic desire to use their gifts to improve their lives and the lives of those around them. Our rigorous academic core, combined with an award-winning service program, strong performing arts tradition, and many opportunities to participate in a variety of team sports, enables us to prepare well-rounded students.

Our doors opened in 1917, welcoming 140 students. One year later, the first commencement celebrated ten graduates. In June 2016 we graduated our 100th class which celebrated 68 graduates. Today, with nearly 500 children enrolled, Saint Francis Xavier Parish School provides students with academic excellence centered in the Catholic values of prayer, learning, and service.

Over the years our physical space has changed and adapted to accommodate new learning tools. In 2016 we refurbished our gym, stage, and multipurpose space to provide better opportunities for our athletic programs and performing arts. Our Early Childhood rooms each have an interactive learning panel for group instruction, our primary grade levels are 2:1 iPads and our intermediate and middle school grades are 1:1 Chromebooks. All of our classrooms have mounted projectors and Apple TV's to assist our teachers in using many different resources for their lessons.

The local community places a high value on academic achievement which is reflected in the annual reports from surrounding public and Catholic schools. Families continue to make the choice to send their children to Saint Francis Xavier with many of our students having parents and grandparents as Saint Francis Xavier alumni. Our students consistently score above the Archdiocese and National benchmarks on the ACT Aspire Tests. Our grade-appropriate curriculum includes religion/family life, reading, mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, Spanish, physical education, drug/alcohol education, art, music, technology and digital citizenship. With the use of the data provided by ACT Aspire, AIMSweb Plus and other formative assessments, our teachers are able to continuously adjust the curriculum to best meet the needs of individual students. We continue using research-based approaches and online program elements to support our curriculum framework based upon current Illinois State Standards and the Common Core Standards. Our teachers follow a Blended Learning model that balances digital learning with traditional methods and increases opportunities for differentiated instruction. Technology skills are taught through every curricular area. We prepare our students to confidently meet the opportunities and challenges that come with the use of technology in our ever-changing world.

Our dedicated staff and generous parent volunteers enable us to offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities for our students. Offerings include Chess Club, Math Club, Science Club, Coding Club, Drama, Band, Junior Great Books, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Yearbook and Choir. In addition, we provide leadership opportunities through Student Council and Peer Mediation. We also have in place social-emotional learning programs such as Responsive Classroom and our Positive School Program. Through these programs teachers are provided opportunities to bond with their students. Our "no-cut" sports programs are coordinated by our Athletic Director and coached by volunteer parents. With a 98% participation rate, students in 5th grade and up can join basketball, volleyball, track and field, cross country, football, and cheerleading.

More than any other program or activity, our all-school Service Program, which is entering its 12th year, exemplifies who we are as a school community. In 2010, we won the Maxine Donahue Award, an award presented by the National Catholic Educational Association. Each year we engage students with people and causes throughout the community to allow our students to fully experience the meaning of service. This strengthens the community and helps those in need as well as empowers our students to see the change they can affect. From our former students and parents, we have learned that service to others continues to be a strong part of their lives after Saint Francis Xavier.

When Saint Francis Xavier received the National Blue Ribbon in 2013, it was a great honor that was relished and celebrated in our community. It validated that we were providing a well-rounded, excellent learning experience for our students. We continue to use test data and our Continuous School Improvement Plan to assess and improve the curriculum. We also recently went through the process of developing a 3-5 year Strategic Plan that focuses on academic excellence and operational vitality.

English essayist, Joseph Addison once said, “What sculpture is to marble, education is to the human soul.” At Saint Francis Xavier, we strive to educate the mind, body, and soul. We believe that our educational philosophy supports the spirit of the National Blue Ribbon award and are thankful for the opportunity to be considered.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Saint Francis Xavier School's core curriculum provides Religion, Reading, Language Arts, Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, Technology, Spanish and Physical Education. The course content addresses the State of Illinois Learning Standards and Common Core Standards within each subject area. Our curricular approach provides students with rigorous learning objectives. Teachers meet throughout the school year to develop, review, and improve the Scope and Sequence for each subject area.

Religion provides our students with values. They learn our Catholic faith through stories, activities, scripture, prayer, discussion and reflection. Core curriculum subject areas in Reading, Language Arts, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies provide students with instructional approaches to meet students at their learning ability. Instruction includes whole group and small group activities, partnering students for peer learning, as well as individualized instruction. Blended learning is incorporated into instruction and technology skills are taught through core curriculum areas.

Teachers differentiate instruction within their classrooms on a daily basis. Using tiered activities, students are allowed to proceed with different levels of support and be challenged. Giving students options, problem-based learning, varying interests, providing rubrics that match skill levels, and setting clear guidelines allow students to be successful in their educational environment.

Integrated Arts give students the opportunity to express themselves in an individualized manner. Art classes emphasize creativity, Music develops an appreciation for all forms of music, Physical Education explores factors that impact a healthy lifestyle, the Learning Resource Center provides students with additional application of research and writing skills, and Spanish gives an appreciation for foreign language and culture.

Teachers assess student learning throughout the school year with summative and formative assessments. Summative assessments include subject area unit tests; ACT Aspire Interim tests each Trimester and ACT Aspire summative in the spring, AimswebPlus with progress monitoring. Formative assessments include class discussions, monthly quizzes, and the Freckle adaptive online learning program.

### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

Saint Francis Xavier School understands the importance of literacy development from the earliest age. We are fortunate to have a preschool program and so our literacy education begins in earnest when children are most receptive to language learning and spirals through grade 8. Teachers in preschool through first grade utilize Michael Heggerty's Phonemic Awareness program. This curriculum emphasizes environmental/emergent language, modeling, and oral language development, as well as helping students make language connections to life and the world around them. In addition, a print-rich environment surrounds our youngest students, and teachers make use of interactive Word Walls. In kindergarten, students also have access to Intensive Phonics. This multi-sensory program provides a strong foundation students can apply to their formal reading and writing instruction. Primary grade students receiving additional support through our Resource department use a Leveled Literacy Intervention curriculum by Fountas and Pinnell.

In grades Kindergarten to sixth, formal reading instruction is presented through Journeys, a basal reading program developed for differentiated instruction by addressing individual reading levels. Journeys offers strategic skills for each reading selection and each lesson provides opportunities for small group activities and learning centers. Leveled readers are used to explore topics from the text in greater detail. Additionally, our teachers differentiate instruction in the classroom by using resources from Freckle, an adaptive online learning program, as well as Newsela, Readworks and CommonLit to meet our students at their learning level and challenge them according to their needs.

Developing articulate writers is important at Saint Francis Xavier. The Journeys program provides the resources to follow a thoughtful and purposeful approach to writing instruction for kindergarten through sixth grade. In grades seven and eight, teachers integrate formal writing lessons with writer's workshop and grammar instruction through the use of the Voyages in English program. Students learn and practice all steps of the writing process and the Six Traits of effective writing at every grade level.

The integrated upper elementary and middle school reading curriculum elicits from students deeper levels of analysis, thought, and reflection. Reading selections are a blend of classic novels, modern fiction, and nonfiction pieces drawn from content areas that include the grade-level service themes such as Civil Rights and the Holocaust. Students utilize synthesis and analysis to develop reports and multimedia presentations that reflect their learning. The upper elementary students participate in Literacy circles that include vocabulary, comprehension questions that challenge students to identify the important content of the novel, and writing skills.

We make a concerted effort to integrate both reading and writing throughout our curriculum. Outside of the formal literacy curriculum, students are provided with many reading and writing opportunities. Each grade level is given a summer reading list that corresponds to beginning English/Language Arts work at the start of each new year. Students can also join Junior Great Books, an extracurricular program in which students read and discuss classic works with adult volunteer moderators. Students develop writing and editing skills by working on the school newspaper and the yearbook. Students from grades kindergarten to grade 8 strive to read as many of the award winning books for their grade level as they can so that they can vote each year for their favorite Monarch, Bluestem or Caudill Award winning books.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Saint Francis Xavier understands the importance of mathematics education from the earliest ages. Its approach to mathematics instruction is to prepare children to think, problem-solve, and apply mathematical knowledge so they will be ready for careers of the future. In three- year-old and four-year old preschool, math instruction takes the form of counting, number recognition, number sense, and mathematical operations. They learn about tools for math, simple measurements and number patterns. Students in grades kindergarten to sixth utilize Everyday Math (EDM) published by the University of Chicago. This program introduces children to multiple strategies for solving problems, which as a result, serves all kinds of learners. Because students are provided with a variety of methods to solve problems, they can find one to suit their personal learning style.

EDM uses a spiral approach in which constant repetition of concepts leads to mastery. To provide students with additional practice and skill application, teachers provide interactive online practice activities, assessments, and games. In addition, the use of the Arithmetic Developed Daily program allows students to review basic math concepts. To inform grouping decisions, instructional emphasis, and differentiation for both struggling and high-achieving students, and ensure that students master basic skills, teachers assess students with AIMSwebPlus assessments of core curriculum three times a year, use the Springfield probes for fact fluency, and the annual ACT Aspire testing.

At the middle school level, the seventh grade uses the textbook Pre-Algebra by McDougal Littell. Seventh grade Pre-Algebra is also offered as an accelerated class. The curriculum continues in eighth grade with the textbook Algebra by McDougal Littell. Middle school students are grouped according to ability and learning style, and instruction is customized for each group of learners. These programs emphasize step-by-step problem solving, multi-step literal equations, quadratic equations, and graphing with the use of graphing calculators. The eighth grade program offers Accelerated Algebra, a high school level course which allows students the opportunity to place into honors algebra or geometry as high school freshmen. All grade levels emphasize writing in the math curriculum through student practice of extended responses. In addition to the curriculum, there are extra-curricular activities in which students may choose to participate. Math Club competitions and Math Club activities give interested students an opportunity for challenges at high school competitions and through National Math Competitions such as Quiz Bowl.

## **1d. Science**

At Saint Francis Xavier, the science curriculum is aligned to The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Teachers strive to make connections between students' prior knowledge and new ideas to form new concepts. They use different strategies and learning activities to make science come alive for students. The teachers' focus is to provide student-centered learning and scaffold from basic to complex applications. Students receive multiple opportunities to examine and interact with concepts, skills, and scientific processes. Teachers differentiate and use various approaches by having the students conduct hands-on activities, and online explorations, in addition to experiences in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM).

Students throughout the program analyze and interpret data in different formats such as graphs, tables, diagrams, and charts. The goal of our science program is to have students, in grades kindergarten through eighth, work through problems to deepen their understanding of cross-cutting concepts. Throughout our curriculum, students will understand models, carry out investigations, and make connections continuously. Additionally, students use the strategy of Claims, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) to construct scientific explanations at age-appropriate levels. Students are encouraged to discuss their findings in small and whole-group settings to arrive at a reasoned explanation.

Feedback is given to the students by their classmates and teachers throughout the lesson to further help the students with their learning. Connections to other disciplines such as mathematics, engineering, and language arts are made to help students further understand that everything is related. When formative and summative assessments are given, the questions are asked in a variety of formats in order for the students to demonstrate a thorough understanding. Our science program has students ask questions, collect and analyze data, observe, infer, and make and support claims. We understand that science is not just about making connections, but it is about applying and understanding the natural phenomena within the world.

## **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Saint Francis Xavier School strives to create an environment in which students can successfully explore disciplinary concepts while developing their inquiry skills. The concepts explored in social studies include civics, economics, geography, history, culture and society. Our current curricula includes Prentice Hall America: History of Our Nation Civil War to Present, Ancient Worlds, and Pearson: My World. Teachers build upon students' previous knowledge to ensure students have mastered the core disciplinary concepts upon 8th grade graduation.

The goal of Saint Francis Xavier is to create well-rounded students who are advocates for social justice. Opportunities to demonstrate this service-based learning are integrated annually. Students are encouraged daily to develop their inquiry skills through a series of high engaging cross-curricular lessons. One example of a cross-curricular lesson is the 8th grade exploration of the Holocaust that is enriched with a novel study of *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Teachers guide students in becoming independent in developing questions to direct inquiry, evaluate primary and secondary sources, and communicate conclusions that will provide students with the opportunity to become proactive in their world. Students are engaged through a variety of instructional processes that are appropriate to their grade level and are exposed to different primary and secondary sources that allow students to explore different perspectives of historical events. Teachers use project-based learning to ensure students' understanding of concepts. Technology and differentiation based support includes HyperDocs, Freckle, Seesaw, ReadWorks, and Scholastic News. Teachers differentiate both formative and summative assessments to meet the varying needs of all students.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

## **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

Saint Francis Xavier is fortunate to be able offer a robust learning program to our youngest learners through instruction, play, and a broad spectrum of learning opportunities. All parts of the curricula are interwoven and supported throughout the early childhood environment. While integrated, all areas of academic and

social/emotional content are represented.

In preschool, students develop skills in pre-reading, listening and retelling stories, recognizing events, recognizing letters and sounds, dictating and illustrating stories, developmental spelling, phonemic awareness, and number sense.

In kindergarten, those skills are reinforced and built upon by the use of a writers' workshop, sight words, phonemic awareness, story structure and comprehension, high order thinking skills, phonological awareness, number and operations, equations, and geometry basics. The basic tools of listening, following directions, and learning and abiding by routines and expectations are underscored and reinforced as the children continue on the path of life-long learning.

Our teachers collaborate in creating scope and sequence and developing a continuum across grade levels. Our early childhood program provides a strong foundation for our students' educational journey.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

In addition to our core curriculum, we offer a well-rounded Integrated Arts Program. These classes are offered to create opportunities for students to explore and realize that they have gifts and talents in many areas. Our Integrated Arts Programs consists of physical education, music, visual arts, Spanish, learning resource, and technology. Students in grades kindergarten to eighth receive Integrated Arts classes once a week, excepting seventh & eighth grade students who receive Spanish & physical education twice a week. We also follow the Responsive Classroom model to promote good character and appropriate social and emotional skills.

Visual Art instruction at Saint. Francis Xavier is project based with emphasis on drawing, painting with acrylic and watercolors, hand built ceramics, paper mache, and sculpture. We believe it is important to create an appreciation of art through hands-on projects and artist appreciation. Through various art lessons, students are able to hone their critical thinking and creativity while learning how to better work with others for a common goal. In addition to enhancing creativity, visual art instruction also helps children with the development of fine motor skills, language and social skills, decision-making, risk-taking, and inventiveness.

The physical education curriculum at Saint. Francis Xavier includes the opportunity for students to learn through a developmentally appropriate program including meaningful content that provides activities for motor skills, fitness, health education, opportunities for social and cooperative skills, and the promotion of physical activity.

The Spanish curriculum at Saint. Francis Xavier is important for student success. The acquisition of Spanish skills is based in learning grammar and vocabulary, playing games, and creating oral presentations. Students have the opportunity to learn in an interactive and communicative environment. They are encouraged to participate through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many different styles and techniques are used to develop basic Spanish skills that students will apply to everyday situations, while exploring the culture and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

The primary goals of the Learning Resource Center are two-fold: to promote literacy and to encourage thorough and responsible research skills. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) director partners with teachers to plan enrichment activities based on the grade-level curriculum being taught as well as reinforcing research and writing skills. Often, these activities will involve technology and digital resources. Students check out a book each visit and are encouraged to read from the Monarch, Bluestem, and Rebecca Caudill Book Award lists.

Our teachers follow a Blended Learning model that balances digital learning with traditional methods including technology skills taught through all subject areas. Our students are introduced to devices as a tool in kindergarten with a small group of iPads. In grades first to third students are at a 2:1 ratio with iPads in each classroom. Our primary grade students show their depth of knowledge through the use of Seesaw.

Fourth to eighth grade students are at a 1:1 ratio with Chromebooks. Students in grades five to eight take their Chromebooks home with them nightly. Our intermediate and middle school students become proficient in Google Suite with a focus on collaboration. In addition to the students' technology, each classroom has a mounted projector and Apple TV allowing the teachers to mirror resources easily from their iPad or MacBook for class wide viewing. Our school has been Digital Citizenship Certified by Common Sense Education for the last four years. We maintain certification each year through dedicated time spent teaching our students the tools needed to protect themselves online.

Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based educational approach associated with greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. We believe it is important to bring together social and academic learning to achieve success. Therefore, we consistently implement a set of practices that build academic and social-emotional skills, which can be used along with other programs. This program's foundation is the Morning Meeting. Every morning classrooms meet for 30 minutes. This time is used to foster student - teacher bonding and practice social skills. Students are taught skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. These skills are taught through games and other activities and practiced throughout the day in classrooms.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

The Saint Francis Xavier Resource program is based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. This system allows us to provide high quality instruction that is matched to student needs. The Resource program at Saint Francis Xavier provides for universal screening of all our students, which identify students with diverse needs. All Saint Francis Xavier students complete AIMSweb Plus benchmark assessments three times a year - initial fall screening, winter screening and spring screening. These benchmarks ensure that all students are performing at the expected level in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, silent reading fluency, oral reading fluency, as well as number comparison fluency, mental computation fluency and concepts and applications in math. Once a student has been identified as having unique needs, the resource teacher and the classroom teacher collaborate to set up an instructional plan to meet those diverse needs. Saint Francis Xavier School uses ACT Aspire and AIMSweb Plus standardized assessments as well as classroom performance to inform student placement in small group and individual Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. Push-in groups are flexible and are used to give extra support for students having trouble learning new skills. Pull-out groups generally address remediation in skill areas that create the foundation for grade level learning. These groups typically meet two to five times a week for 30 minutes each session. It is our responsibility to adjust our instructional plan to meet the needs of each student. Interventions must originate within the classroom, and when needed, the resource teacher will implement supporting interventions. The instructional plan states the student's goals and the specific interventions that will be utilized to meet those goals.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Saint Francis Xavier offers an excel math class in 7th and 8th grade. Freckle, an adaptive online learning program, is used from 1st grade through 8th grade for both in classroom learning and for homework to differentiate for students.

#### **3c. Special education**

When necessary, the Resource Team develops Student Support Plans to provide specific accommodations. The classroom teacher and the resource teacher monitor and document the effectiveness of the interventions and accommodations. After a specified time, the team will evaluate the plan to decide how to proceed using the RTI model. When school-based interventions have proven to be ineffective, the referral process may begin for a district evaluation in order to meet the needs of the student.

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

In conjunction with our Saint Francis Xavier Resource Team, our public school district provides our English Language Learners with pull-out instruction two times a week. The district assesses our students in the fall for placement in this program. The district assesses how often and when the students will receive services each year. Parents are notified of screening and placement in this program by Saint Francis Xavier.

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

This year, the Resource Team has offered push in and pull out Executive Function support for students in 4th-8th grade. This is based on teacher input. A focus is placed on organization, time management, work completion and writing.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Saint Francis Xavier School provides students with opportunities to thrive academically. Classes provide differentiated instruction to meet each student's individual learning needs. Students are provided with opportunities for re-teaching through the school's resource department. Students who need speech services receive them through the local public school district. Students are provided with enrichment through the junior high math club, an accelerated seventh grade math class and a high school level math class in eighth grade. Technology is blended into every academic subject and integrated arts class.

Saint Francis Xavier has many programs that allow students to grow socially and emotionally. The school has a no-cut sports program in addition to musicals, talent shows, science and STEM clubs, Junior Great Books, Girls on the Run, math club, yearbook club, chess club, student council, peer mediation, Falcon Friends, Fortnightly, and many volunteer opportunities are made available for students of various grade levels. Throughout their time at Saint Francis Xavier, all students are encouraged to find a club, activity, or opportunity that allows them to develop and share their talents and interests. Older students are given leadership positions that allow them to act as role models for younger students and strengthen their communications skills and social development. These include interacting with young students through Falcon Friends, Student Council, teaching younger students how to effectively communicate through Peer Mediation, moderating after school events, and helping students leave school grounds safely as members of the safety patrol.

The teachers at Saint Francis Xavier are supported in many ways. They are allotted a yearly classroom budget and provided with a laptop and iPad to use throughout the school year. The Family School Association and School Advisory Board show appreciation and partnership with the teachers throughout the year. The social committee, made up of faculty members, plans several yearly social events for the faculty and staff. The Instructional Development Team is made up of faculty members who serve as representatives to share and gather input from staff members. The school administrators are supportive of teachers and receptive to teacher ideas and input. Teachers are always able to meet with administration and other departments when needed. Overall, Saint Francis Xavier is a school where, both staff and students alike, want to be; as evidenced by the number of families and staff members that return year after year. We have several families that have sent multiple generations to our school. The level of support that is extended to teachers, as well as the positive experiences created for all students, lead to a school environment in which all students are encouraged and excited to succeed.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Saint Francis Xavier School believes that students succeed when they feel safe, welcomed, and that they and their families belong to their school community and the community at large. Great efforts are taken each year to ensure that all students and their families have this positive experience. At the heart of the family-school relationship at Saint Francis Xavier is the Family School Association (FSA) comprised of all families of our students. FSA leadership is comprised of a Board of ten parents, forty committees, and hundreds of parent volunteers.

FSA offers opportunities to participate in various school social events, fundraisers, and community service projects, including our annual Service Day. At the onset of each new school year, FSA hosts a social gathering for new families to mingle with current families and become acquainted with the school. An FSA representative stays in contact with each new family throughout the first school year to ensure a smooth transition, and to provide insight and advice for navigating the new environment. An introduction to the core curriculum and enrichment programs including Junior Great Books, Art Smart, religious programs, and athletics is provided. Throughout the year, FSA coordinates with a core of volunteers to organize a variety of events open to the community including the Falcon 5K race, a biannual all-grades talent show or musical theater production. For grades fifth to eighth, an annual ice-cream social, holiday socials and parent-child events. Teachers and parents collaborate to provide year-long themed service projects and field trips. The

School Advisory Board and Advancement Director organize an annual Open House in the winter to allow current and prospective families the ability to explore the vast opportunities at Saint Francis Xavier.

Saint Francis Xavier fosters collaboration and communication between parents and staff. Open communication is facilitated through traditional means as well as through technology. Powerschool, our online student grade portal, provides students and parents with access to assignments, due dates, and up-to-the minute progress reports for grades 4-8. Each teacher also maintains a classroom website with relevant information from their classrooms. Pertinent classroom information can easily accessed, and teachers readily respond to e-mail contact from parents.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

At Saint Francis Xavier School, we encourage a professional culture where teachers feel supported and appreciated for their talents in education. Our teachers are provided many opportunities to share their gifts with each other and with our students. A culture of learning exists throughout the school year and supports the teacher's efforts to engage students in learning. Each teacher is provided a laptop and an iPad for use in lesson planning and teaching.

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated annually in January. The week's festivities begin on Sunday with an Open House for the community. Teachers and staff engage in special activities all week with each other, our students, parents, and community members to celebrate our Catholic faith.

We have a 'click and clap' form on our school website for parents to recognize teachers and staff members when they would like to provide a compliment. Our Family School Association (FSA) also provides kind gestures for teachers and staff throughout the year to promote a positive school culture and let staff know that they are appreciated for all that they do for students. A staff run Social Committee organizes events and get-togethers outside of school for staff to build community. Teachers are encouraged to visit other schools or their colleague's classrooms to gain new skills and ideas.

During faculty meetings teachers share strategies for teaching, collaborate with each other, and discuss instructional approaches to present to students. Professional development opportunities are provided throughout the year. Each teacher receives a yearly professional development budget specifically to cover costs for outside programs they attend. After teachers attend these professional development opportunities, they come together at a faculty meeting to discuss and share what they learned.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The principal undertakes the primary leadership role at Saint Francis Xavier School. The principal works collaboratively with the parish Pastor, the School Advisory Board and the Leadership Team which is comprised of the assistant principal, administrative assistant, and advancement director. The principal also works collectively with the Instructional Development Team, comprised of representative faculty members, and provides guidance to the success of the entire student body. Within the educational school environment, faculty joins curriculum team committees to share their expertise and knowledge. Each team member works diligently to provide students with appropriate curriculum and achieve high academic scores.

The principal, as the instructional leader, consults with the Positive School Program comprised of teachers and parents to develop activities for students to learn about virtues, saints, and to treat others with dignity and respect. The principal works with each team, committee and program to complete the objectives for the success of the school. The philosophy and structure of the school exists so that our students may come to know and love God while pursuing academic excellence. Staff strives to create a Catholic educational community in which the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional needs of each student are met within the scope of our educational program.

Parents are encouraged to regularly access their child's information regarding work completion and test/quiz/assignments and grades on the PowerSchool portal throughout the school year. Students are given the same opportunity. Teachers, along with administration, monitor and implement the Continuous School

Improvement Plan (CSIP). The CSIP contains reading, math and writing action plans which provide resources for teachers to enhance their teaching strategies and identify areas of development.

Decisions for professional development are made to elevate student learning and achievement. Saint Francis Xavier School has developed a five-year strategic plan for continued success, which guides the leadership as they make decisions regarding school environment, rigorous curriculum and programming.

The Strategic Planning Committee consists of diverse stakeholders. The committee develops goals and objectives to guide the leadership teams as they make current and future decisions regarding Mission and Catholic Identity, ensure Governance and Leadership, provide Academic Excellence, and develop Operational Vitality.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Living in service of others is core to our belief system at Saint Francis Xavier. In accordance with our motto: We Pray, We Learn, We Serve. The leadership, faculty, staff, and community of Saint Francis Xavier have committed themselves to providing an integrated service program that connects meaningful service opportunities with curriculum-based learning and prayerful reflection. Guided by the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, each grade level is designated a unique, age appropriate theme on which to focus throughout the academic year. Service themes include: Caring for God's Creation (Preschool and Kindergarten), Older Friends (Gr. 1), Children's Rights & Responsibilities (Gr. 2), Poverty & Homelessness, (Gr. 3), Hunger (Gr. 4), Veterans & Service Members (Gr. 5), Ability Awareness (Gr. 6), Human Rights & Civil Rights (Gr. 7) and Social Justice (Gr. 8).

Teachers and parent volunteers introduce the grade level theme and coordinate lessons throughout the year with the use of handouts, speakers, presentations, videos and books. Theme guided group activities are an important component of the program, allowing students to develop deeper understanding of the impact of their service and allowing them to make connections with real people. Examples of the group activities include: collecting food and working in the food pantry, visiting nursing home residents, making food for the homeless shelter, hosting a mass and reception for local veterans and attending events with special needs buddies. All of this culminates in a school-wide Service Day when each grade level goes into the community to provide hands-on service related to their theme. Upon return, all students are engaged in reflection about their service and make thoughtful connections about their experiences.

Our award winning service program enhances our strong curriculum and empowers our students to understand that they can affect change. The program instills in our students a lifelong commitment to service for others. In addition, the program enhances social emotional learning by inspiring confidence, knowledge and attitudes necessary to develop empathy, teamwork, appreciation of diversity, communication and ethical responsibility. This program is often the reason families tell us they have chosen our school. Therefore, we believe our service program inspires our students to be the best people they can be, which increases their academic success.

## PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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1. Non-public school association(s): Catholic

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No
3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$6610  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$5000
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      23%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      67%