

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

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Saint Peter's School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2900 Olney Sandy Spring Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Olney State MD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20832-1520

County Montgomery

Telephone (301) 774-9112 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.stpetersschoololney.org E-mail school@stpetersolney.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* Ms. Kelly Branaman E-mail branamank@adw.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Washington Tel. (301) 853-4508

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 Mrs. Anna Santos
(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

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

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	17	18	35
K	10	17	27
1	14	16	30
2	14	14	28
3	18	10	28
4	21	18	39
5	11	16	27
6	26	17	43
7	33	21	54
8	24	18	42
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	188	165	353

*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
 - 7.6 % Asian
 - 8.5 % Black or African American
 - 22 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50.2 % White
 - 11.6 % 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: 1%

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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	378
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 10

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

50 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>39</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</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: 1

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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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.

Post-Secondary Status	
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2012

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

To unlock all the doors of the human character to release the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of each child.

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

Saint Peter's School has served as a Catholic school in Olney, Maryland for over 60 years. Established in 1957 by Saint Peter's Parish of the Archdiocese of Washington, Saint Peter's School continues to build on the foundation of care, faith, and experience of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill, PA. Integrating the patron saint's symbol of the crossed keys, the school's motto is "Unlocking potential through faith and knowledge".

Saint Peter's School serves students in grades PreK through 8th. The current enrollment is 353 students. Approximately 89% of the students are Catholic; a significant number of these families are parishioners of Saint Peter's Parish. The demographic make-up of the student body reflects the surrounding area, the majority of the students are White (50%). Hispanic or Latino students make up the largest minority population (22%), and Asian and African American students make up the remainder of the student body (8% and 7 % respectively). Fourteen percent of the students receive special education services through the school's Learning Lab.

Saint Peter's School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award for Excellence in 2012. Since then, the school continues to meet the criteria in both the reading and math scores. The National Blue Ribbon recognition was instrumental in not only recruiting new families, but it is also a credible piece of information that is included when seeking grants or developing marketing materials. The graduates go on to attend some of the area's most rigorous Catholic, private, and public high schools, receiving academic, fine arts, and leadership scholarships averaging approximately \$300,000 a year.

The school recognizes the importance of academic excellence in such a competitive market as the Baltimore-Washington area, but it is the Christ-centered teaching that makes Saint Peter's an excellent school. In accordance with the school's mission statement, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities seek to enrich every child's God-given gifts by teaching to the whole child. Faith formation permeates all aspects of school life, both in and out of academic classes. The students receive instruction in the Catholic faith in all grade levels every day. Extra-curricular activities, such as those led by the Spiritual Life Committee, Student Council, and Student Ambassador program, encourage our students to live their faith through leading liturgical events, service projects, and mission-related activities. It is important that the students not only learn about the faith, but also live it.

Saint Peter's highlighted its visual and performing arts program in its 2012 Blue Ribbon application, and that program continues to grow. In 2015, a playwriting class was incorporated into the Language Arts program in 5th grade. This interactive course is taught by National Players from the historic Olney Theater. Students learn character development, storytelling, blocking, and stage direction. As a culminating activity, the students perform their own plays in front of their parents at the Olney Theater. In 2017, a puppetry class was introduced to the 4th grade classes. This is taught by a local puppetry company and at the completion, the students perform their puppetry skits in front of their parents and the students in 3rd grade.

During the strategic planning process, the stakeholders researched how the school could bring this creative thinking process into the academic subjects. The decision was to expand the work of the other side of the students' brains. The school is located in an area rich in science and technology companies, and so to bring in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) program was a natural progression.

In 2014, the school entered into a partnership with Project Lead the Way (PLTW), a nationally recognized not-for-profit organization that develops STEM curricula for US elementary, middle, and high schools, after the School Advisory Board's Strategic Planning Committee determined that the school needed to enhance its math and science program upon reviewing school testing and parent surveys. A teacher was selected to become the school's STEM Coordinator, and she received extensive training through PLTW. The school's focus was on grades K-5, believing that it is best to institute a new program and culture at the school's earliest years, and then grow the program as it had been done with the math acceleration several years earlier. Saint Peter's School was the first elementary school in the state of Maryland to adopt the Project Lead the Way elementary program, Launch. Teachers in grades K through 5 have been trained, and the

STEM modules for these grades have been integrated into the science curriculum. For the past two years, the middle school science teacher has been trained in PLTW's Gateway program – the curriculum involves green architecture and "the magic of electrons". The melding of this program and our visual and performing arts program, enriched with the Catholic faith, has organically become the school's STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) focus. In September of 2019, the school opened its own STREAM Lab, providing a place for students to explore, build, and experiment. All grade levels and subject areas have used the STREAM Lab to enhance their curricula and make learning more hands-on. For instance, the middle school Spanish teacher recently decided to use Spanish vocabulary to run experiments in the STREAM lab. Students would choose a piece of paper out of a jar that had one of three senses (smell, touch, taste) written on it. The students were then blindfolded and depending on the sense chosen, the student was presented with a piece of food or an object. Using the designated sense, students would try to identify the object/food, but had to do so in the Spanish language. Students not only had a fun time, but more importantly had an enriching learning experience.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Saint Peter's School aims to educate the whole child. This means that our approach to teaching the curriculum and meeting standards and benchmarks must be multi-faceted. Our teachers across all grade levels and subject areas follow the Archdiocese of Washington's standards; however, in order to measure student success, the teachers perform baseline testing at the beginning of each school year, both through Scantron's Performance series for grades 2-8, and also through testing that they create or various publishers create. Throughout each quarter, the teachers are required by administration to give a certain number of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress. This ensures that students are not only being challenged, but that they are given ample opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the material in each class. In addition to the number of assessments required, the principal also asks that the types of assessments be varied. For example, in 5th grade science, students are expected to analyze the scale of the solar system and its components. To measure students' understanding of this concept, the 5th grade science teacher asks students to label components, build replicas, explain the material through expository writing, and present to the class. While this is a robust example, it clarifies what kinds of opportunities teachers are giving students to meet various standards. To support a team approach to educating students, teachers are also required to submit graded assessments to the principal and vice principal each quarter for them to review and sign. This practice not only supports the teachers' efforts, but it also shows the children and parents that the administration is directly involved with their children's education.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Saint Peter's School's curriculum is based on the academic standards of the Archdiocese of Washington. This curriculum is aligned to state and national standards that assure the school families of a rigorous academic program that is also infused with Catholic identity. Reading, literature, grammar, vocabulary, and writing are the components of the school's Language Arts program. The curriculum in grades PreK through 3 emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and journal writing. To enhance reading instruction and in efforts to make it more specialized to meet all children where they are, each class in grades PreK through 3 are required to have small group instruction using "decodable readers". With these small groups, the average student teacher ratio is 6:1. As the children transition into the grades where they will need to read to learn, rather than to learn to read, the emphasis shifts. A strong grammar program remains the hallmark of traditional Catholic schools, and Saint Peter's continues this legacy. The school added the Junior Great Books program to supplement the curriculum in grades 3 – 8. The program is introduced through library classes for students in grade 3, and it is integrated in the Language Arts program in the other grades. This inquiry-based program helps to develop the students' critical thinking skills. The school has seen students rise to the challenge of participating in interesting and mature discussions that are focused on analysis rather than just comprehension.

Saint Peter's School recognizes the importance of a solid writing foundation in order to progress through further education. Starting in the primary grades, teachers guide students to form cohesive sentences and paragraphs. In grades 4th through 8th, students attempt to master lengthier and more in-depth writing pieces, including the four main types of writing: narrative, persuasive, descriptive and expository.

Assessments are vital to developing the appropriate instruction. PreKindergarten and Kindergarten students are assessed in the area of concepts of print. A licensed speech pathologist also meets with each child and gives a speech and language assessment, at no cost to the families. The Resource Teacher and Reading Specialist administer the Woodcock Reading, K-TEA, and running records when requested as support for the classroom teacher. Students in grades 2nd through 8th take the web-based adaptive standardized test, Scantron Performance Series, in Reading. Data from these tests, as well as the frequent formative testing

given in all grade levels, assist the teachers in developing flexible grouping and in designing differentiated activities.

1c. Mathematics

Saint Peter's accelerated its math curriculum several years ago after the administration listened to parent concerns about the lack of rigor in the program. Students in all grades levels now receive instruction in the next grade level's math standards. This was a complicated process that took several years and much professional development and parent education to accomplish, but it has been quite successful. Instruction consists of modeling, guided practice, and independent practice. Students who struggle with a concept or skill are offered extra instructional periods, and the class curriculum is modified, as necessary, to ensure that all students have a chance to succeed. Project-based learning that incorporates real-life problems is another strategy used by the teachers to make the math concepts engaging and thought-provoking. The STEM modules of Project Lead the Way are all based on helping the world. For example, the 3rd grade module on flight concludes with the students designing a payload for their planes that will bring necessary supplies to a country that has been struck by a natural disaster. Students must consider the weight and form of various materials to determine the best provisions to fly in. In 6th grade math, the students recently finished their zoo project that incorporated their study of perimeter, area, and polygons with the animal research they had done for a report in science class. There were 8 specific polygons required for building animal enclosures. The students had to create these same 8 shapes, and calculate the perimeter and area based on a chart of square footage required per the specifics required for the animal in an enclosure. Students in grades 2 – 8 are tested 3 times throughout the year using the web-based adaptive standardized test, Scantron Performance Series, in Math. Priority skills and standards are identified after the testing and the teachers use them to inform their future instruction.

1d. Science

The Archdiocese of Washington recently developed new science standards after much research and input from the area teachers. Saint Peter's embraced this work because it fit in with the STREAM initiative. The science standards are addressed through collaborative problem-solving and the end results are assessed first by the students. They are required to consider their final projects and identify changes that would improve on their design. The children then make the necessary adjustments and document the changes. Formative and summative assessments are given throughout the units to ensure understanding of the concepts. The students in grades 5 and 8 are also assessed via the web-based benchmark testing through Scantron. The objectives of the STEM modules taught throughout the grade levels include: structure and function; light and sound; properties of matter; stability and motion; and robotics and automation. Last year a unit on green architecture, the design of buildings that try to minimally affect the environment, was introduced to the middle school students. This year, a unit on electrons and circuitry is being introduced as well. These activities incorporate the Design Process (Ask, Explore, Model, Evaluate, Explain) that guides the students to work collaboratively, using higher level thinking skills, to solve real-life problems. The teachers also use a textbook series from which they pull relevant information, activities, and assessments, based on each grade level's standards.

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

The Social Studies curriculum at Saint Peter's School strives to teach more than facts and dates, which is thought of as very traditional when it comes to history. Learning about others in the world leads to empathy and the development of a global perspective. Aside from the textbooks, students use primary sources, streamed videos, and listen to guest speakers to increase an understanding of and appreciation for the relationships within the history of the world. This global perspective is achieved through the instructional strategies of simulations and role playing, mock trials, debates, and opportunities for critical thinking in both class discussions and writing. Recognizing that students learn in different ways, the faculty of Saint Peter's School rely heavily on collaboration and communication. Teachers meet in their teams (Primary, Intermediate, and Middle School) to discuss the social studies standards and discuss strategies to effectively spiral the curriculum. Another outcome of the faculty's communication routine is the frequent development of cross-curricular lessons. One example is a unit in 7th grade: when the students were studying Africa in

Social Studies, the Literature teacher introduced the novel *Facing the Lion*, a coming of age story of a boy in Kenya. The art teacher gave the students the history of African masks found in the central African regions. The students then designed and produced 3-dimensional representations. Finally, the students visited the Smithsonian Museum of African Art as their culminating activity.

Another example of how students engage in learning history is by trying to live it. In multiple grades, teachers have students reenact events or try to imitate important figures from history. In fourth grade, there is an annual cross-curricular activity in which students learn about a specific saint; they are responsible for learning about the saint, the era in which he or she lived, the geographical information about the saint's home country, and what the social and cultural norms were during the time and in that particular place. Once students have completed the research, they set up a live museum for parents, teachers, and students to visit.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Saint Peter's PreKindergarten program was established in 2010 after much consideration and research by the School Advisory Board. Now a full-day program, the philosophy of the school's program has always been to make learning fun while building academic confidence in a loving environment. Lesson plans and units include instruction in math and literacy, with an infusion of the Catholic faith. The teachers meet with the Kindergarten and First Grade teachers to ensure that their students will be prepared for the academic expectations of the day school. The students participate in all the school activities that help them matriculate easier into the day school.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Saint Peter's School's mission is to teach to the whole child. This means that it is the responsibility of the school to offer opportunities to develop all the talents of the students. Students in grades PreKindergarten through Eighth grade receive instruction in the visual and performing arts, music, physical education, and media (computers and library) once a week. The lessons in these classes reinforce or support the academic curriculum.

The philosophy of the school's visual and performing arts program is based on the research that these arts help to develop the students' ability to be more imaginative, conceptual, and critical thinkers. Students are introduced to art concepts of lines, patterns, and color, as well as the masters throughout history. In the Saint Peter's drama program, the student actors learn elocution, stage direction, and dance numbers. The crew is responsible for building the set, lighting, sound, and costumes/make-up. The Spring Musical is staged at the local high school's new theater. In the music program, concepts and skills of music education are taught through listening, moving, singing, and composing. This program cultivates an environment that reaches all types of learners: auditory, visual, verbal, and kinesthetic. The school also offers an instrumental band program for students in grades 4 through 8. Lessons are offered for brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments. The band plays at several school events and competitive venues.

The school's physical education program emphasizes cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and various sports skills. The activities and games provide the students a chance to work on teamwork, problem-solving, and sportsmanship. A 12-lesson course on Ballroom Dance is incorporated into the 7th and 8th grade physical education curriculum. Students are taught the steps of the Waltz, Swing, and the Tango. This PE component helps the student with both coordination and social skills. A competitive, yet fun dance is held at the end of the unit.

Learning a foreign language opens up the world to the students. They will come to understand and appreciate the way of life, customs, values, and cultures of people from many areas of the world. Spanish is taught 5 days a week in the middle school. Sixth grade is the introduction level. Seventh grade works on efficiency, and 8th grade builds to proficiency. The textbook is only the starting point. The students apply their knowledge in many ways. They Skype with people in different countries; communicate in many ways with a Catholic school in Argentina; make travel plans with a Spanish travel agent; and even emailed the

Pope. The teaching of Spanish has allowed the students to become citizens of the world.

Saint Peter's Media Center integrates library science and instructional technology. In the information age, library skills must include the integration of technology. Students need to successfully access, analyze, and integrate information from many different sources. Saint Peter's is striving to fully implement the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) technology standards into the classes. The intention is to lead the students to be global citizens through empowered student learning, problem-solving thinking, and design engineering. These goals fit nicely into the school's STREAM initiative.

Catholic schools exist because Jesus Christ commanded the disciples to "go and spread the good news." Saint Peter's charism is to teach the students about Jesus so they can receive the gift of salvation and pass on the teachings of Jesus to others. Students serve as altar servers, lectors, and ushers at school Masses. They lead liturgical celebrations throughout the school year, the Living Rosary, Stations of the Cross, the Blessing of the Advent Wreaths, and the May Procession, among others. The students and their parents participate in many community service and social justice activities throughout the year.

As part of strategic planning, the Home and School Association surveyed the families, asking what else they were looking for in their child's school. Many parents responded by asking for after school clubs and classes that would nurture their children's talents and interests, aside from the Extended Day Program which provides childcare before and after school. This program has grown in the past four years, and now a variety of classes are offered, such as lessons in voice, keyboard, guitar, ukulele, art, cooking, robotics, chess, and yoga. There is something for everyone at Saint Peter's!

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Saint Peter's School strives to address gaps in student achievement. While it is not always possible to completely close these gaps, there are ways to take responsibility for decreasing the gaps. Since students performing below grade level are on a case-by-case basis, that is exactly how teachers approach them. The administration and teachers converse about individual students and why performance might be below grade level. For instance, one student might transfer to Saint Peter's in third grade and lack fundamental skills in math and grammar. In a case like this, the teacher would provide additional resources for the student to "catch up" and inform the parents of practice skills that would be helpful at home. Perhaps another case revolves around a student dealing with a chaotic home life; the child's abilities might actually be on grade level, but the performance is not reflecting that. If this were the case, the teacher would do his/her best to understand the home life to make accommodations and adjustments in the classroom to address what may be lacking at home. Since personnel can sometimes be limited in the sense of helping each student individually at all times, many teachers utilize the strengths of their own students to help others (i.e. one student may be responsible for assisting another student with organizational skills such as a binder clean-out). In general, the teachers at Saint Peter's School go above and beyond to help students be successful. They are willing to sacrifice personal time to make a difference in a student's education, and more importantly, in a student's life. Teachers understand the importance of differentiated instruction in order to reach all students where they are.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Just as students struggle to perform at grade level, Saint Peter's School has students who perform above grade level and need just as much attention and support. The school never wants a student or family to feel as if learning is over when standards are met. Aside from a rigorous curriculum to begin with, Saint Peter's has found ways to challenge its students. First, the math curriculum at Saint Peter's is ahead by a entire grade level; students are already expected to learn and master an advanced curriculum. This alone assures that even above grade level math students are being pushed. In addition, teachers are asked to highlight differentiation in math and language arts on a weekly basis; one example is the fourth grade teacher created centers for the students; all students "randomly" attended three of five centers. Instead of randomness, the teacher coordinated the more advanced group to visit the three most challenging centers, while other

students only saw one of the above grade level centers. In grades K through 5, each reading class has small group instruction (and sometimes individual) at least twice a week. Students are reading material in their groups that is suitable to their abilities; teachers are sure to have the objective be the same across reading groups, but while one group may be trying to identify theme in a story with a 950 Lexile level, a more advanced group may be looking to discover theme through a story with a 1205 Lexile level. Teachers are expected to be constantly looking for not only challenges for students, but to be looking at and honing in on areas of excellence as well.

3c. Special education

Saint Peter's School has a dedicated, effective Student Assistance Team (SAT) that serves as a resource for student instruction. The team members include the Reading Specialist, the Resource Teacher, the School Counselor, and two classroom teachers. Their purpose is to provide support for students performing below expectations or gifted students who are not sufficiently challenged. As part of the Catholic mission of the school, the administration and faculty recognize the dignity of the human person and have a deep respect for life. The teachers work collaboratively with the team to consider the individual needs of the students, encourage ongoing staff development, and bring a greater understanding and respect for children with special needs. The team identifies and responds with early intervention. The SAT communicates with the parents regarding a child's specific strengths and weaknesses, and the team uses appropriate terminology that is clear and professionally accurate when meeting with the local public school system, as necessary. The team maintains the documentation, develops a plan when accommodations or modification are appropriate, and the team tracks the effectiveness of in-school interventions. The team keeps current with research regarding effective instructional techniques and shares them with the teachers. At this time 13% of the students at Saint Peter's are on a Catholic Accommodations Plan.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

It is important for students to feel valued and loved at Saint Peter's School. The Christ-centered environment supports the learning process. Participating in Mass, receiving the sacraments, and celebrating Church traditions bring the students, faculty and school parents together in the central mission of the school. Students serve as readers, ushers, and choir members at the Mass. The 5th graders make up the Spiritual Life Committee. They are responsible for leading the school in seasonal liturgical prayer services and participating in service projects throughout the year. They also visit the local assisted living facility at the holidays, bringing gifts and songs to the residents.

Leadership opportunities within the school help our students develop important skills of communication and management. Student Council offers the students a voice in some aspects of the school. They lead the school's Veteran's Day Assembly where local veterans are celebrated and thanked through prayer, song, and gifts. The Student Ambassador program selects students who exemplify the virtues of kindness and respect. These students walk the PreK and Kindergarten students into their classrooms or the Parish Hall every morning. They also act as the buddy for new students either just enrolled or those who visit the school. Safety Patrols monitor the arrival and dismissal of cars everyday – paying special attention to the security of the younger students. These 7th graders also are called upon to help guests who come to the school for meetings.

The Buddy Program pairs up students in different grade levels and together they attend Mass and participate in academic and fun activities. This helps the young students feel they have someone looking out for them, and it reminds the older students to be trustworthy role models. Students in the Environmental Club learn to be good stewards of the Earth and provide experiences for the school to model this tenant of the Faith, such as starting a school-wide recycling program, advocating for water bottle refilling stations in the school, and planting trees on Arbor Day.

Our students and parents realize the importance of supporting and celebrating the teachers. Although it's hard to understand all that teachers have to do, they are appreciative and try to make that known. The Hospitality Committee of the Home and School Executive Board treat the teachers once a month with a unique breakfast filled with delicious goodies and decorations of the season. They host quarterly luncheons consisting of home-made cuisine and surprises.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

When asked why they chose Saint Peter's School, most new families talk about the warm sense of community. Parents are the first teachers of the students, and the administration and faculty value the strong relationship between home and school. Several parents serve as ambassadors to the school. They give tours when new families come to Open Houses, and they speak at school events about the programs and vision of the school.

A Welcome Committee was established several years ago to help the transition of new families into the school culture. New families are paired with a member of the committee and contact information is exchanged. A New Parent Social is held at the beginning of the summer and summer playdates are arranged so that children of the same age groups can get to know each other. A New Family Picnic is held just before the start of the school year for some last minute fun and discussion.

The Home and School Association (HSA) offers many events and activities for both the parents and the students to engage in. Several dances are held each year, and students also enjoy family events such as Trunk or Treat, Bingo, and outdoor Movie Night. STREAM Night is a collaborative event where families walk throughout the school trying out STEM activities, visiting the Art Show, and listening to the choir sing. A popular new event sponsored by the HSA is the International Night. Families celebrate their heritage by bringing in cultural objects, food, and other information to share. Tables fill the Parish Hall with the sights,

sounds, and smells of the diverse community. Presentations on cyber safety and helping children deal with stress were two of the latest topics offered for parents. These opportunities are another way the HSA builds communication between home and school.

Parents enjoy helping their children's school, whether it is by assisting in the classroom or working on the annual gala. The administration encourages this because it builds that sense of community and allows the parents to see all that goes on at Saint Peter's. Parents can be seen every day reading to the little ones in the library, bringing the milk and lunches to the classrooms, assisting in the office with bulk mailings, and offering their professional expertise in the middle school classes. Parents logged over 6,500 hours in the volunteer database last year.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The faculty of Saint Peter's is highly qualified and realizes the importance of staying current on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Because of the faculty's dedication to helping students reach their highest potential, it is important that they feel valued and heard, which is the responsibility of the administration. To this end, the principal and vice principal attend all department meetings to be sure they are up-to-date on any student concerns or great school-wide issues. Additionally, the administration performs official monthly "walk-throughs" for each teacher and schedules a follow-up meeting to debrief and have conversation.

The Archdiocese of Washington's Catholic Schools Office provides professional development through several venues. Two mandatory all-day collaboration events for teachers and administrators are scheduled during the school year and the topics focus on goals identified through the strategic planning process. The administrators at Saint Peter's choose 1-2 teachers for each collaboration day to share their expertise. This shows teachers they are appreciated and recognized as masters in their fields.

At the school level, Saint Peter's has 10 half days scheduled for professional development. Some of the meetings are for the entire faculty where topics range from data analysis, to cross-curriculum activities, to integrating technology into lesson plans. Other meetings are held by levels (primary, intermediate, middle school) so the teachers can focus on strategies or assessments that are specific to their students. Sometimes guest speakers are brought in to both kinds of meetings to bring authentic data and fresh ideas.

Each teacher develops their own personal professional development goal, based on Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Their goal must be research-based, so the teacher provides the administration with 5 articles or books that will give the teacher the necessary foundation. A list of action items is next – this is the plan of what the teacher will do to achieve their goal. Finally, the teacher identifies a number of assessments that he/she will complete to document the learning process. This could be a journal of the experience, student or parent surveys, documentation of student learning, or the report from a critical friend who is a part of the process. This personal professional goal gives the teacher the opportunity to design a plan that is important to him/her and will also benefit their students.

Lastly, the school budget allocates a certain amount of money each year for teachers who find professional development specific to them. The school will support and pay for whatever they can to encourage continual growth and development for teachers.

4. School Leadership:

As a parish-sponsored school, Saint Peter's follows the policies and practices of the Archdiocese of Washington and the guidance of the Catholic Schools Office, as well as most of the requirements of the State of Maryland.

The pastor is the chief administrator of the school and canonical leader of the parish. He works with the principal and assistant principal in the operation of the school. This is a collaborative team. The principal is primarily responsible for implementation of curriculum, oversight of instruction, and the analysis of

assessment data. The assistant principal handles disciplinary concerns, budget tracking, curriculum team meetings, and assists the principal, as needed.

The pastor and principal are a strong leadership team who work well together to energize the school community. Both bring a wealth of experience to their positions. They bring a positive energy to the school and encourage parents to be fully engaged in helping to set a vision for the school and to work to make that vision a reality.

Within the faculty, the teachers are divided into levels – primary, intermediate, and middle school. Tasks and questions that are appropriate for each level are given to the teams to discuss. It is important for teachers to have a voice in several areas of administration, and they appreciate the occasions for development.

Leadership opportunities for the students are important avenues for the building of a strong community. Students may participate in the school Masses, sing at school events, perform in the drama program, run for Student Council, be the smiling face of the school as a Student Ambassador, or help enrich the Catholic identity of the school through the Spiritual Life Committee.

Parents are an important part of the leadership of the school. The members of the Home and School Association provide opportunities for social events and informational nights. They foster the communication between the parents and the administration, which is important for a strong relationship. The School Advisory Board is tasked with developing and evaluating the school's strategic plan. This plan includes the school's overarching goals of Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, and Recruitment and Retention. Assisting the principal in developing a 5-year budget that covers proposed plant facility needs and curricular advancements, all the while keeping the tenuous enrollment trends in mind, is the Board's current assignment.

Saint Peter's remains a strong, dynamic school because there are so many people invested in its students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The creativity, teamwork, and risk-taking that naturally occur when children participate in art classes, produce musical compositions, and experience that first moment on stage, should be integrated into the other academic subjects. While there is a great need across the country to improve students' knowledge base in the science and math fields, STEM goes beyond. STEM is a process, not a product. It is about making observations and asking questions; developing ideas alone and with others and then testing them. And finally, it is about reflecting on and evaluating the results, knowing that improvements always need to be made.

Incorporating the Project Lead the Way program in the the youngest grades and watching the process move up the grade levels did more for the school than introduce science concepts in an engaging way that used real-life problems. It also became integrated into the arts program when technical and computer drawings were kept in the students' log books. Technology was used more often. Sketches became models produced in the 3-D printer and airplane simulations became paper gliders for the flight module. Music and musical instruments were created in the sound and light module. The teachers of Language Arts asked for a way they, too, could bring more reflection and robust discussion to their classes. Adopting the Junior Great Books program was the result. The R in STREAM stands for Religion. The faith is integrated throughout the activities, usually in the form of moral/ethical judgments in the design process. Do you make a plane carry a bigger payload that will bring more food to hurricane victims if it might jeopardize the safety of the plane and its pilot, as seen in the flight module?

As each year has passed, the students have developed the academic and social skills to meet the challenges offered. They can now see the potential when given different materials, anticipate problems before they cause tension in the team, recognize the strengths in their team members, and move quickly from a poor design to create anew. The students work together now, they no longer seek individual satisfaction. Interestingly, this process has also unintentionally reduced the occurrences of bullying across the grade levels because the students rely on each other.

The STREAM program is a wholistic method of teaching that supports the cross-curricular and social responsibility goals embedded within the mission of Saint Peter's School.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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? \$10450
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3388
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 7%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 71%