

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 Mr. Steven Zimmerman
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 101 Hampton Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Greenville State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29601-1928

County Greenville

Telephone (864) 271-3870 Fax (864) 271-0159

Web site/URL https://smsgvl.org E-mail principal@stmarysgvl.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* Mr. Bill Ryan E-mail wryan@charlestdiocese.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Charleston Tel. (843) 261-0420

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. Theresa Gevaert
(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	16	26	42
K	18	10	28
1	12	9	21
2	13	16	29
3	11	12	23
4	13	16	29
5	8	21	29
6	10	9	19
7	8	12	20
8	10	14	24
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	119	145	264

*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
 - 3.8 % Asian
 - 3.4 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82.6 % White
 - 4.2 % 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: 7%

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	267
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Spanish, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %
17 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 24

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

20 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>4</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>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</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: 3

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	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 19:1

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	97%	98%	98%	97%	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.

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. 2009

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

We invite our students to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as faithful disciples and prepare them for outstanding achievement in high school and later life.

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 Mary's Catholic School is a diocesan Catholic elementary school that serves 263 students in grades K3 – 8. Our beautiful campus is located in the heart of downtown Greenville. With over 119 years of history, Saint Mary's is the oldest Catholic school in the upstate and one of the oldest Catholic schools in all of South Carolina. Our focus on Tradition, Virtue, and Excellence ensures that our students continuously exceed our high expectations, test above the state average at every grade level, and graduate well prepared for high school and beyond.

As the primary apostolate of Saint Mary's Catholic Church, our students benefit from home, school, and parish all working in collaboration for their success. Our rigorous curriculum is taught by veteran teachers, many of whom hold advanced degrees and have over a decade of service to the school. Since its inception, Saint Mary's has benefited from the contributions of religious sisters as members of the faculty: the Ursuline Sisters, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, and most recently the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia. Our parent community is invested and assists our faculty in the education of our students.

Our goal is to educate the whole child through the lens of the Catholic faith. We want our students to be successful academically, athletically, artistically, and spiritually. Academically, our students continuously test above grade level. Our curriculum is developed and frequently reviewed by the Diocese of Charleston and our teachers use a variety of teaching and assessment strategies to ensure student success. Athletically, 65% of students in grades 5 through 8 participate in at least one of our sports teams. Our program focuses on teamwork, work ethic, student health and fitness, and competitive success. Our coaches also ensure that our students are successful in the classroom: athletes receive opportunities to complete homework during practices and can face temporary suspension from the team if their grades start to suffer. Artistically, our students engage with both a rigorous classroom art and music curriculum while also having ample opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities that appeal to their talents and interests. Both faculty and volunteer parents work hard to provide a wide variety of opportunities for students in all grade levels, and over 60% of our students in all grade levels participate in at least one of our clubs, choirs, or instrument ensembles, with many of our students participating in two or more. All of this is offered within the spiritual framework of the Catholic faith. Our students learn the catechism, practice the sacraments, attend weekly mass, participate in daily prayer, and witness the vocations of our Religious sisters, parish priests and deacons, and lay teachers. All school and classroom decisions are made through the lens of our faith.

We also invest heavily in our campus and our infrastructure. In recent years, we have added additional classrooms for our foreign language department. We have a 1-to-1 Chromebook program for our middle school students which allows them to use these devices for research, projects, and assessments, and we have increased our internet bandwidth for the benefit of both teachers and students. We have improved parent communication with a new Student Information System that comes with an integrated app for smart devices and easily accessible online grade books, lesson plans, and financial services. We have overhauled our school website to streamline the enrollment and admissions process for prospective families as well as providing easier access to resources for current parents. We are currently conducting a five-year capital campaign with the hope of expanding our gymnasium, adding an additional music classroom, and renovating our carpool line.

Saint Mary's previously won the National Blue Ribbon School award in 2009. It is with great humility that we accepted such a prestigious recognition. We believe this award was a testament to over a hundred years of academic excellence and the hard work of our faculty, staff, and school families. In the decade since, we have doubled down on our core values and continued to invest in our students and their growth. Our foreign language department has expanded to include K3-5th grade French. Our math department has widened the timeline of our academic tracking to ensure we are best serving the academic needs of our students at all levels. Our extracurricular opportunities have grown to include a drama club, art club, Youth in Government, and multiple levels of band, orchestra, and choir. Our athletic teams have flourished, including multiple state championships for both our boys and girls basketball teams. Our administration has changed from a Religious sister serving as principal to the first lay principal in our school's history. All these changes and more have contributed to our students' continued success. We consider it an honor to qualify and to apply for Blue Ribbon recognition again.

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

The philosophy of education of Saint Mary’s is summarized in our motto: Tradition, Virtue, Excellence.

“Tradition” here signifies more than just immersion in the sacred traditions of the Catholic Church. It also means a dedication to traditional educational methods founded on the dignity of the human person. Our focus on “Virtue” ensures that all content across the curriculum and in all subject areas is delivered through the lens of the Catholic faith and is consistent with our faith and the moral expectations of our school families. Finally, “Excellence” includes setting high expectations for our students, parents, faculty, and staff. Saint Mary’s students consistently exhibit excellence academically, athletically, artistically, and spiritually, and these achievements are recognized and celebrated as a school.

Our specific classroom standards are developed by the Diocese of Charleston and undergo a cyclical review process. The implementation of these standards at Saint Mary’s is handled through a collaborative effort between the administration and the teachers, who bring their own personal experience and expertise to the classroom. Saint Mary’s has an extremely low turnover rate among faculty which allows for consistency and continuous improvement across multiple school years and grade levels.

Finally, Saint Mary’s believes in strong cooperation between the school and the home. In our handbook, we acknowledge that parents are the primary educators of their children and it is our job to assist the parents in students' academic and spiritual formation. With this in mind, Saint Mary’s strives for constant communication with parents and families regarding their children’s education. This ensures that not only do successful students receive the attention and support that they need, but also struggling students can be identified and evaluated early and a plan can be put in place to provide intervention and assistance that is consistent both at school and at home.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Saint Mary’s school invests significantly in the Language Arts instruction of our students. Our curriculum includes phonics, grammar, spelling, handwriting, writing, reading/literature, journaling, and vocabulary. Our middle school students continue to strive for mastery in all of the above areas and also focus on research skills, speech and oral presentations, speaking fluency, sentence diagramming, critical thinking, keyboarding skills, and MLA format. Our grammar series is *Voyages in English* for grades 2 through 7 and *Holt Traditions: Warriner’s Handbook* for grade 8. Teachers utilize additional textbook resources for phonics, vocabulary, handwriting, and composition.

For literacy, our elementary school utilizes the *Wonders* series (McGraw Hill) in grades K5-5th. This series requires consistent instructional methods and rising expectations as students progress from grade to grade. Since each grade level builds on the prior year, unit tests and writing samples are kept in a portfolio for each student which is passed from teacher to teacher at the end of the school year. This allows our elementary teachers to identify areas of strength and areas for growth in their incoming students before the school year begins. Combined with the data provided by our standardized test scores, teachers are able to begin effective instruction tailored to their new students immediately in August. Additionally, both our 5th grade and middle school language arts teachers have completed training in the *Excellence in Writing* program and utilize it in their classrooms. This program is highly praised by many of our parents.

Common to Catholic schools, handwriting and cursive are important parts of the curriculum for our youngest students. Students receive daily instruction in writing in cursive through 3rd grade, and cursive is required by teachers in all grade levels above that. It is our philosophy that learning cursive provides beneficial kinesthetic instruction that promotes student focus and memorization. It also ensures tidiness and formality in the assessments they complete.

We are very blessed at Saint Mary's to have a class bell schedule that allows us to dedicate two class periods per day to ELA instruction in grades 6 through 8. This allows us to split our ELA curriculum between a class period dedicated to grammar and vocabulary and a class period dedicated to literature and writing. The extra time we invest into our students is apparent in their achievement on the NWEA MAP tests and on the PSAT. This past year, eight of our 8th grade students qualified as South Carolina Junior Scholars based on their performance on the Evidence-based Reading and Writing section of the PSAT, and our class average score was 54 points above the state average.

We provide two tracks for our 8th grade students: English I and English I Honors. Although this tracking allows students in honors to receive more intense instruction with higher expectations for assessments, both tracks are considered high school courses and are eligible for credit at several of our local high schools. Students in middle school utilize 1-to-1 Chromebooks for research, drafting, editing, and presentations.

1c. Mathematics

Math is one of the strongest departments at Saint Mary's, and it is with great pride that we provide an excellent foundation in math at all grade levels. The Diocese uses a spiral curriculum which allows standards to be reinforced and expanded from K5 through 8th grade. Our youngest students begin by using hands-on manipulatives and learning simple math facts and problem solving. Our daily math work and review sessions are important building blocks for creating confidence in math skills. Later, students advance to timed tests, math games, logical thinking exercises, and problem-solving skills. By graduation, our students are proficient in both the concrete concepts of arithmetic and the abstract concepts of Algebra. Students in K5- 5th grade use the Sadlier Progress in Mathematics series and our middle school students use textbooks from Holt McDougal.

Students in grades 3 through 8 participate in a weekly math lab to focus on additional skill-building and supplemental instruction. All math labs are led by our middle school math teachers, including the math labs for grades 3, 4, and 5. This allows our teachers to become familiar with our younger students and their learning needs before they arrive in middle school, and it gives our students the opportunity to experience alternate teaching styles than those of their core math class. Our middle school students also participate in the MATHCOUNTS program and compete annually.

Our middle school program focuses heavily on preparing students for high school. Students in 7th grade are tracked into either Pre-Algebra or Math Course 2, and students in 8th grade are tracked into either Algebra Honors or Pre-Algebra. Algebra students are eligible to receive high school credit upon successful completion of the course. We work with families, analyze standardized test scores, and assess students' academic achievement to place them into the track that best fits their abilities. Placements are flexible and students are able to move between tracks during the school year if it is determined that the other track would be a better fit for them. Our middle school tracking was reviewed and expanded just this year to better serve our student population, and we have seen excellent results in the classroom and in standardized testing and have received positive feedback from parents about these changes.

As part of the enrollment process, all prospective students participate in math placement testing to help determine the grade level or track that is the right fit for them. Students who are admitted with identified deficiencies in math are offered before or after school tutoring by one of our math teachers to help strengthen their areas of weakness and bring them up to grade-level proficiency.

Our students consistently perform better than the state and district average in math at all grade levels according to both our NWEA MAP testing and our 8th grade participation in the PSAT. A majority of our graduates leave Saint Mary's with high school credit for Algebra and enroll in local high schools in the honors track for Geometry.

1d. Science

Science is taught in a spiral curriculum: it teaches and reinforces scientific concepts from multiple disciplines each year through fifth grade. In middle school, one year is dedicated each to earth science, physical science, and life science to offer deeper and more robust instruction in these content areas. Our standards are developed by the Diocese of Charleston, and for textbooks our elementary school utilizes the Scott Foresman “Science” series while our middle school utilizes the Prentice Hall “Science Explorer” series. Our curriculum includes many teacher-led experiments and demonstrations and includes frog dissections for our 8th grade students.

Technology is an important tool in our Science classrooms. All classes have interactive SMART boards and internet access for research, demonstrations, and educational videos. Our elementary classes share a class set of iPads. Our middle school students benefit from our 1-to-1 Chromebook program, which allows students to conduct their own research or engage with interactive apps or online science tools. Teachers take advantage of these tools by engaging students with a wide variety of assessment strategies including presentations and lab reports.

The science curriculum for middle school culminates in our annual “Science Day” at the end of the school year. Our 8th grade students become the teachers: they work with partners to develop fascinating scientific demonstrations in biology, chemistry, or physical science. They create a short, engaging lesson to explain their demonstration or their scientific phenomena. All other grade levels travel through the campus visiting each of the “classes” led by our 8th graders to learn about science and participate in their demonstrations. It is one of the most popular days in the entire school year, and our students look forward to their own 8th grade year when they will get to serve as teachers and mentors for the rest of the school.

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

Saint Mary’s social studies curriculum follows the standards developed by the Diocese of Charleston. For textbooks, students in grades K5 through 5th use the “My World” series from Pearson. Middle school students use the “Discovering Our Past” series from McGraw Hill, but our teachers supplement these textbooks with a multitude of external materials in order to teach our standards and promote student engagement.

Students study weekly themes and units, map skills, different cultures, environmental issues, governments and the distribution of resources, US History, and World History including political systems and world religions. Study is aimed at deepening an appreciation for other cultures and the dignity of all persons. Students in grades 4 through 8 eagerly participate in the National Geographic Bee each year.

Our 4th grade class participates in “Why America is Free”, a month-long immersive program where students experience what it was like to live and learn during pre-revolution America. This program culminates in Patriots' Day when students dress in period-appropriate costumes, recreate a colonial town square, learn how to sew, march, and dance, and attend a secret meeting of Revolutionaries preparing to fight back against the British.

Our 7th grade students learn about democracy and the legislative process by participating in the South Carolina YMCA’s Youth in Government program. Students work together to develop their own bill throughout the semester and then attend a three-day conference in our state capital where they propose and debate their bills in a model legislature made up of their fellow students from other schools.

Our 8th grade students attend a week-long trip to Washington DC and Williamsburg, VA during their Spring semester. During this capstone experience, students visit all the famous landmarks, venues, museums, and historical sites to witness first-hand what they have learned about in class throughout the year.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Saint Mary's K3 program is designed for flexibility: students can attend half-day or full-day for either three or five days per week. K3 is led by one of our Dominican Sisters, which allows us to offer an immersive introduction to Catholic life for our youngest students. Consistent with our school's mission, our goal for K3 is to educate the whole child. This means that students learn how to be reflective, how to pray, and how to practice virtue along with learning their letters and numbers. We integrate traditional and Montessori strategies to ensure students are learning independence and responsibility through both formal instruction and through creative and educational play. Both our K3 and K4 students participate in many of the same weekly special classes as our older students: Art, Music, Library, Spanish, and French.

Our K4 is a full-day, five-day-a-week program with enough rigor to be equated to a standard kindergarten classroom. Students participate in weekly themed lessons, begin early writing and math skills, and benefit from ample time for collaboration and play. K4 students partner with our 5th graders as "buddies" and they maintain this relationship for the next three years. This allows our younger students to learn from their older peers while allowing our older students to serve as mentors and role models. Our K4 and kindergarten teachers collaborate to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten. Formal evaluations are conducted near the end of the year to measure student readiness.

We work closely with parents to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our youngest students and placing them in the environment where they can find the greatest growth and success. Our K3 and K4 programs have both seen tremendous growth over the past five years and our enrollment rate in K5 has benefitted from these programs.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Saint Mary's curriculum includes a wide variety of special area classes in order to provide a well-rounded education and appeal to the particular talents and interests of all students.

Students in all grade levels (K3 through 8th grade) participate in weekly classes in visual arts, music, and library / research skills. Our visual art curriculum focuses on a wide variety of mediums and skills for individual, group, and whole class projects. Older students also learn the basics of art history and the biographies of famous artists. Students with particular interest and talent in visual arts can participate in an extracurricular Art Club where they can complete more advanced projects in a small group setting.

Our music curriculum includes both vocal and instrumental performance as well as music history and theory. Students learn selections from a wide variety of genres and from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As a school, students participate in two musical performances per year (a Christmas program in the winter and a Grandparents' Day program in the spring). In addition to our classroom curriculum, Saint Mary's offers a wide variety of extracurricular options in performing arts including band, orchestra, mass choir, show choir, and drama club.

Library class offers an opportunity for younger students to listen to stories from different genres and authors. Students are also taught the purpose and function of a library and are able to browse and borrow books that interest them. Older students utilize the library as a supplement to their core classes and have an opportunity to read, do research, and work on individual and group projects.

Physical education is offered twice weekly to students in K4 through 5th grade and once per week for middle school students. Younger students work on gross motor skills, sportsmanship, and following rules and directions, while older students learn about proper nutrition and exercise, practice advance drills and skills, and participate in team building. Students at all levels cooperate and compete in a variety of physical activities and sports in individual, small group, and team settings. The Saint Mary's athletic department includes teams for boys and girls cross country, girls volleyball, boys and girls basketball, and boys and girls golf. These sports provide additional opportunities for exercise and competition to students year-round.

Students in grades 1 through 8 receive instruction in Computers & Technology in our iMac computer lab

once per week. Students are introduced to internet research, word processing, spreadsheets, slideshows, keyboarding skills, and the basics of coding. Additionally, students in middle school participate in Saint Mary's 1-to-1 Chromebook program, which allows them to utilize a netbook for research, collaboration, and assessment in their core curricular classes. Saint Mary's also offers an extracurricular coding club for students with specific interest in learning more advanced coding skills.

Our foreign language department includes both Spanish and French, a rarity among Catholic and private elementary and middle schools in South Carolina. Students in grades K3 through 5th take both Spanish and French once a week. Upon reaching 6th grade, students decide which language they would like to pursue as a daily class as part of the core middle school curriculum. Students in 8th grade are enrolled in Spanish 1 and French 1 and are eligible to receive high school credit for these courses.

Finally, and most importantly to our Catholic identity, students in all grade levels receive instruction in the faith and opportunities to form themselves as disciples of Christ. Religious instruction is a daily class at all grade levels (for both Catholic and non-Catholic students) and the curriculum covers a wide variety of topics: prayer, sacraments, the mass, vocations, church structure and hierarchy, church history, Catholic contributions to art, music, and science, biographies of saints and clergy, current events from a Catholic perspective, and more. This religious instruction is a vital part of our school life and our curriculum and is the deciding factor for many of our families that choose to enroll in our school. Our Catholic identity is a key component of our mission statement and affects not only our religious instruction, but also every decision we make across the board.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Because Saint Mary's is a small school with only one class per grade level, students move from one grade to the next as a unified group. It is therefore very uncommon for a struggling student to enter a classroom in August without their new teacher already being aware of their academic strengths and weaknesses. Teachers across grade levels meet throughout the year and especially in the fourth quarter to ensure that each teacher knows about their incoming students and to ensure interventions and strategies are consistent from year to year. The structure of our middle school, in particular, allows teachers to work with the same students for their 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years, which ensures students are comfortable with their teachers and that strategies to promote academic growth are consistently applied.

Students performing below grade level are identified as early as possible (via classroom grades, MAP testing, and teacher observation), and intervention begins with communication to the parents. As the primary educators of their children, it is Saint Mary's priority that parents are aware of any emergent academic concerns and are part of the discussions and strategies to improve student achievement. Common strategies include reorganizing a classroom or seating chart, partnering a struggling student with a trusted peer to ensure accountability with homework and studying, small group supplemental lessons with the teacher (before school or at lunch, for example), providing additional time or a distraction-free environment during assessments, a change in the student's extracurricular schedule, or scheduling after-school tutoring.

For students who might be struggling from an undiagnosed learning disorder, the teacher and/or administration will work with parents to schedule an official evaluation. Whenever possible, Saint Mary's will enact the academic recommendations listed in these official evaluations. Student progress and improvement is carefully monitored and communicated to parents.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students achieving above grade level is common at Saint Mary's. We give credit for this blessing to our rigorous curriculum, high expectations, emphasis on excellence in all things, our experienced staff with a low turnover rate, excellent parental cooperation and involvement, and the overall structure of our school (one class per grade level, students move together as a unit year-to-year). It is always our goal that our "average" student be above average.

Students above grade level are recognized and praised but are also challenged with elevated expectations and academic rigor. Although there is no official honors track in place in our elementary school, each individual teacher relies on their expertise and experience to provide an adequate challenge to high-achieving students. Common strategies include more rigorous requirements on projects or assessments, lessons that focus more frequently on advanced or challenging topics, difficult optional extra credit questions or bonus assignments, outside reading, and out-of-class supplemental material including online activities such as Khan Academy MAP practice tests which are personalized to the skill level of individual students.

Once in middle school, our math and language arts departments prepare students for high school achievement-level tracking. Saint Mary's splits middle school students according to subject proficiency in 7th grade math, 8th grade math (Algebra), and 8th grade language arts.

Many Saint Mary's teachers are also willing to work with gifted students in non-classroom supplemental activities and clubs. Saint Mary's School is a National Beta School of Distinction, and academically gifted students are encouraged to join our award-winning Beta Club to participate in a variety of competitive challenges catered to their particular skills and interests. Membership in our Beta Club is dependent upon high academic achievement in all classes. Other activities for gifted students include our concert strings and concert band, our coding club, and MATHCOUNTS.

3c. Special education

Due to the size and space limitations of our campus, Saint Mary's does not offer a formal special education program. This necessity is communicated to all prospective families during the enrollment process to ensure that our school is the right fit for each child's needs.

Although no formal program exists, Saint Mary's student population includes many students with minor learning disabilities who are able to be mainstreamed and participate in regular classes with their peers with support. This includes several students with high-functioning Asperger's Syndrome, anxiety, ADD/ADHD, and speech and language impairments, among others. Our Director of Guidance works with students and teachers in all grade levels to ensure that appropriate and reasonable accommodations are in place and that specific strategies to address learning difficulties are applied consistently across grade levels and subjects.

If a student has undertaken a formal medical evaluation to diagnose a learning disability, a copy of their evaluation report is kept by the administration and shared with teachers to ensure that medical recommendations are followed to the best of our ability. Students with undiagnosed learning disabilities are monitored by their teachers and, through communication with the parents, referred to a specialist for a formal evaluation.

For students with speech and language impairments, a speech therapist from the Greenville County Public School System is on-campus one day per week to conduct therapy sessions with each diagnosed student. For students suffering emotional disabilities (including anxiety and depression), Saint Mary's Catholic Church employs a licensed independent social worker who is available to meet with students before, during, or after the school day. Teachers work with this counselor to ensure students are available to meet while also minimizing missed class time.

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

The vast majority of English Language Learners at Saint Mary's are members of the local Hispanic Catholic community and most begin their time at Saint Mary's in our youngest grade levels. Although these students join our pre-kindergarten (K3 and K4) classes with weaker English proficiency than their peers, their young age and total immersion at school allows them to catch up rapidly. As such, Saint Mary's does not have a special program for ELL and intervention is offered in the same way it is offered to any student who might be struggling in a class or achieving below grade level.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Saint Mary's, we want our students to be invested in their education and proud of their accomplishments, and our primary strategy for engaging our students is to engage their entire family. Our close relationship with parents, grandparents, and caretakers provides consistency between home and school which encourages students to view their teachers and classmates as extensions of their own families. Our small total enrollment ensures that this welcoming atmosphere is maintained at all grade levels. Since students move from grade to grade as a single cohesive unit, there is familiarity and healthy rapport among peers, and new students are welcomed by both classmates and teachers.

Throughout the school year, faculty and staff use a variety of strategies to engage and motivate students. In the classroom, our teachers draw attention to students serving as good examples and offer encouragement and rewards for hard work and achievement. As a school, we come together for a weekly assembly each Monday. During this time, we celebrate students' successes as a community. We will announce the score of last week's basketball game, or ask our Beta Club to stand after bringing home over twenty trophies from their convention, or give a round of applause to our students in the Youth In Government program for getting their bill signed into law, and more. Any win, success, achievement, or award is acknowledged and celebrated as a school community. Often times, parents are invited to these assemblies to join in the celebration, and these student achievements are always shared with parents in our newsletters and social media posts.

As part of our Catholic identity, our teachers instruct students in the power of virtue. The Virtues in Practice program follows a three-year cycle and focuses on a different virtue each month. At the end of the month, students are nominated by teachers and three winners are chosen to receive our prestigious Golden Cross Award. This award recognizes the wonderful example set by our students for their peers. This is an opportunity to reward students for their character and not just their grades or athletic talent. It guarantees that student success is recognized and celebrated no matter what form it takes.

The goal of our school discipline policy is to provide a positive learning environment for our students. Our Director of Guidance serves as disciplinarian and utilizes a proactive approach to assist teachers to create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As a Catholic school and an apostolate of Saint Mary's Church, our school community extends beyond our classrooms and school into the wider parish community. Many of our parish organizations (such as the Council of Catholic Women and the Knights of Columbus) are invited to interact with our students and contribute to school events throughout the year, and many of our school families have opportunities for friendship and fellowship outside of the classroom through participation in various church activities and clubs. This allows our students to see their peers in different circumstances and at different times (even over the summer) which strengthens their friendships and promotes their emotional and social growth beyond the school day. This healthy relationship between the church and the school is maintained through the efforts of the pastor, the principal, and our families.

Parents and families are encouraged to volunteer at the school and be present at events and milestones throughout the school year. Volunteer opportunities include chaperoning field trips, serving lunches in our cafeteria, organizing and supervising classroom parties, and serving as leaders in clubs or activities. Families are invited to our school play, talent show, Catholic Schools Week celebrations, our annual Christmas Show and Grandparents' Day program, and a variety of other events on a class-by-class basis. Since parents are considered the primary educators of their children, it is important that they participate in school life as often as possible throughout the year and feel invested in their children's education.

Another way that our students reach out to the community is through social outreach and charity work. Each

grade level is required to conduct a service project for a local organization or charity every year. These projects come in all shapes and sizes: our K4 students collect items to support new moms at Birthright of Greenville, our 4th graders donate snacks and drinks to the juvenile detention center, our middle school sells Halloween candy and donates the proceeds to the St. Francis Hospital's cancer research program, our entire student body collects canned goods to support the sisters at the Monastery of St. Clare in nearby Travelers Rest, and more. These projects show our students the many forms that service and almsgiving can take while also providing an excellent educational experience. Students learn about different charities, different local organizations, and different careers and how we can serve our community no matter where our strengths or interest lie.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Saint Mary's has an incredibly low turnover rate among faculty and staff. Many of our teachers dedicate their entire careers to the service of Saint Mary's because they find their time here to be so fulfilling and rewarding. This low turnover rate is one of our greatest strengths: parents become familiar with our teachers' expectations and policies, our teachers develop a strong rapport with each other that promotes communication and collaboration for the benefit of our students, and our administration can trust our teachers to be experienced and mission-focused without needing to micromanage their classrooms.

Professional development opportunities are offered throughout the year at both the school and Diocesan level. Teachers have four to six professional development days a year. These days include seminars on various topics delivered by experts and professionals, time for collaboration between schools and between grade levels, and quiet work time to develop lessons and grade student assessments. These PD days are held both in-house and at other Catholic schools in the upstate. Additionally, the Diocese of Charleston hosts a two-day biannual education conference in Columbia, SC, for all Catholic school teachers in the state. This event is the culmination of two years of professional development work and gives our teachers an opportunity to meet their peers from other schools to network, share ideas, engage with vendors, and more. Representatives from the National Catholic Educational Association are also on-hand to discuss membership benefits and provide additional PD opportunities to attendees.

Our administration encourages faculty members to further their education whenever possible. Our annual Title II allotment for professional development is open to any and all teachers who wish to register for webinars, education conferences, or graduate classes for either recertification or for personal enrichment. Education opportunities are shared with faculty and staff. Almost 50% of our teachers have a graduate degree, and those that do not yet have a Masters degree are encouraged to explore opportunities to earn one.

But most importantly, our professional culture is maintained by treating our teachers like professionals. Their wisdom and expertise are valued, their feedback is collected and acknowledged, and their concerns are addressed. Our employee policies are dictated by what is best for our teachers and the administration seeks to support them in their careers and in their personal and professional growth. Teachers' contributions outside of the classroom (as volunteers, chaperones, and substitutes) are acknowledged and celebrated throughout the year.

4. School Leadership:

Saint Mary's Catholic School leadership is hierarchal: the pastor is the ultimate authority for both the church and the school. The principal serves directly under the pastor and is in charge of day-to-day operation of the school, including curriculum, finances, human resources, teacher evaluation, fundraising, and more. Faculty and staff serve under the principal and are in charge of their classrooms or their departments. The principal and pastor meet weekly to ensure that the pastor is kept aware of all information affecting the school community.

Our school Advisory Council meets with the pastor and the principal monthly and consists of nine seats. Members can serve two terms of three years and each member is the parent of at least one currently enrolled student. Effort is taken to ensure that a variety of academic backgrounds and careers are represented on the council: law, medicine, public relations, finance, and more. The council is divided into several

subcommittees including Mission Enhancement, Marketing and Development, and Technology. Although the council has no decision-making authority, it is one of the primary avenues to collect parent feedback and propose policy changes to the administration.

In accordance with the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, any concerns should be resolved at the lowest level: parents are encouraged to speak to the teacher before addressing the principal, and to the principal before addressing the pastor. This ensures that our teachers are given the respect that their positions warrant and that school parents do not bypass the teacher's classroom authority by taking concerns directly to the administration. Teachers meet with the principal routinely to keep him aware of issues with individual students or with the class as a whole and to review assessment data. All communications between teachers and families include a copy sent to the principal to ensure accurate records are kept and to keep the administration informed of issues. The principal makes decisions that respect the wisdom and expertise of our teachers, and administrative micromanaging is avoided whenever possible.

Grade-level meetings among teachers occur biweekly and school-wide meetings of the entire faculty and staff occur on an as-needed basis throughout the school year. Respecting the voice and the time of the faculty is one of the top priorities for the pastor and the principal. A positive working environment for teachers leads to a positive learning environment for students. Our low teacher turnover rate is a testament to this philosophy.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are many factors that contribute to the academic success of Saint Mary's students, but the theme that unites them all is TRADITION. Tradition is one of the three core values listed in our mission statement and it influences our school in countless ways.

First and foremost, there are the traditions of the Catholic faith. As a Catholic school, there are policies in place that should be familiar to any prospective families: the uniforms, our Religion curriculum, our discipline policy, and more. Families that come to Saint Mary's know what to expect from day one: we teach and live the faith and make all our academic and administrative decisions based on the tenants of the Church. Our school families value the high standards and the high expectations that Catholic education is known for, and many of our non-Catholic families choose Saint Mary's because they understand how these traditions can enrich their children's education and formation.

There are the traditions of Saint Mary's school itself. Founded in 1900, Saint Mary's has a rich history. Religious sisters from various orders have served as teachers at Saint Mary's since the school's founding. The school year is filled with traditional events that have been around for generations: such as our annual Fall Festival or our K5 "If I Had Wings" program that takes place each January during Catholic Schools Week. We often enroll students who are children or grandchildren of Saint Mary's graduates, and our alumni love to visit our campus and relive some of the same traditions that they experienced as students years ago. These factors make Saint Mary's feel like home to our students: safe, stable, and consistent.

Our faculty and staff are another type of tradition: our teacher turnover rate is remarkably low. Our third-grade teacher is a Saint Mary's graduate who has served our students for 36 years, our first-grade teacher has been with us for 25 years, and over a dozen other employees have worked at Saint Mary's for more than 10 years. This low turnover rate instills confidence in our families and brings success to our students. Our faculty are veterans in the classroom, they have excellent rapport and collaboration with each other, they maintain the high standards that we set at our school, and they bring their wisdom and experience of what it means to be a Saint Mary's student into the classroom year after year.

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? \$8125
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2636

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 4%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 9%