

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

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Sister Mary Sue Carwile  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Saint James Catholic School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 830 W Broad Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Falls Church State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 22046-3106

County Falls Church City

Telephone (703) 533-1182 Fax (703) 532-8316

Web site/URL https://www.saintjameschool.org E-mail mainoffice@saintjameschool.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Joseph E. Vorbach III E-mail joseph.vorbach@arlingtondiocese.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Arlington Catholic Schools Tel. (703) 841-2519

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 n/a n/a n/a n/a  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

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

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

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

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	14	12	26
1	27	23	50
2	19	25	44
3	23	19	42
4	25	25	50
5	31	22	53
6	28	28	56
7	27	25	52
8	24	22	46
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	218	201	419

\*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
  - 4.5 % Asian
  - 2.9 % Black or African American
  - 11.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 66.8 % White
  - 14.3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	428
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Egyptian, Polish, Tagalog, Serbian, Ethiopian, Italian, Farsi, Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %  
18 Total number ELL

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

Total number students who qualify: 30

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

32 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>3</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: 7

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
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.	1
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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes X      No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.      2014

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

The Saint James Catholic School community is committed to educating the whole child within the Catholic faith tradition by promoting academic excellence and service. Imbued with the IHM Charism, where Jesus is the center and Mary is the model, we strive to inspire, lead, and challenge our students to fully develop their God-given abilities.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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The guiding compass for life at Saint James Catholic School is our commitment to the education of the whole child which begins with the development of a deeply personal spiritual life for each student and member of the school community. Founded in 1906 and administered by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary since 1923, Saint James is formed in the IHM tradition of love of Jesus through devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. The mid-day recitation of the Angelus or Regina Caeli draws our attention back to our loving God. This spiritual development continues through the many avenues that deepen our Catholic faith traditions including joining together for the celebration of Mass, opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance, Advent and Lenten customs, Christmas pageants, May Procession, the re-enactment of the Last Supper, and Living Stations of the Cross. In addition, preparation for the reception of the Sacraments is of paramount importance to our students.

Saint James School is both proud and honored to have been recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 1998-99 and 2014. In the years following our last award, we have worked as a school community to maintain and build upon this level of excellence, while at the same time, welcoming in more diverse members of our community including those who do not have the benefit of English as their primary language. Because we do not have a formal ELL program, we have expanded our existing resources to assist these students and families. We have grown tremendously as the diversity of the school membership increases. Our school leadership changed with the addition of an assistant principal. Along with a faculty of nineteen classroom teachers and eight specials teachers for the various disciplines of the curriculum, we have added support for our Resource Program, increased the number of classroom aides, and added a technology coach for our teachers.

In addition to the generous financial support our PTO provides for academics, school safety, technology, and fine arts, the organization also provides a speaker series for parents and teachers throughout the year. The PTO provides an avenue for community support and encouragement for all stakeholders of Saint James School beginning with grade-level socials each fall.

Over these past five years, our technology improvements have included laptops for our middle school students, a new computer lab and a robotics lab. We also incorporate the use of technology to enhance the educational program for our students with special needs. Our fine arts department has worked diligently with classroom teachers to provide cross-curricular experiences that impact the growth of the whole person. These efforts have borne fruit in our newest tradition of the Saint James School Fine Arts Night, which shines a light on our choir and graphic arts programs. Following the guiding compass of our mission statement, we hold STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math) as a definitive path toward educating the whole child in our Catholic faith tradition. Rigorous academic endeavors and activities include, but are not limited to participation in the Battle of the Books, IHM Math and Virginia State Math Contests, Diocesan Shakespeare Festival, Colonial Day, and Cowboy Week.

We teach our students that they have a profound impact on the world around them. Through our many service initiatives such as collecting food, clothing or monies for outreach to both local and global communities, our students are developing hearts that see beyond their own world and needs. Each fall, outreach begins with the collection of gloves, scarves, and other clothing for the Falls Church Children's Center. As needs arise through natural disasters, our students and parents prove to be extremely generous. Every year more charitable activities are established.

Our House Program, comprised of middle school students, develops leadership, responsibility, and awareness of the needs of others through service. Monthly activities and speakers provide the students with global concerns and ideas on how to address them. The Saint James Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society continues to grow as it strives to develop leadership and service among its members. The NJHS students provide Christ House with meals and service. These students also participate in various service programs to help the school, including tutoring younger students. Members of the NJHS and our Confirmation candidates come to appreciate the value of giving of themselves as they volunteer to meet the required service hours.

Our faculty and staff remain committed to teaching our Catholic faith along with a strong academic curriculum. Our students continue to excel in academics, reach out to their community, support various charities and stand as witnesses to the Gospel values of peace and justice. Saint James School strives to stand as a model of Catholic education and academic excellence in our school and city.

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

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

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

Saint James Catholic School provides a Christ-centered community that focuses on the whole child in order to enable each student to reach his/her full potential spiritually, academically, emotionally, and socially. The faculty and administration, in partnership with families, offer a safe and nurturing learning environment. All students, with their diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles, are encouraged to take an active role in their education in order to prepare for the opportunities and challenges of life. This, our fundamental philosophy, is the guiding principle for teaching all areas of the curriculum.

Saint James School implements the curriculum guidelines provided by the Diocese of Arlington, which follow the benchmarks of learning set forth by the State of Virginia Standards of Learning, as well as goals established by the National Catholic Education Association. In recognition of each child's unique gifts, abilities and desires, the faculty of Saint James School seeks to come to know each child and how that child learns. Professional development, focusing on differentiation at all levels and in all areas of the curriculum, has been a guidepost over these past five years, as we have sought to bring our students to the highest levels of his/her development and abilities. Scores gleaned from Scantron Performance Testing are routinely and carefully analyzed. This leads to remediation and accommodations for challenged as well as advanced students, to reinforce and/or enhance goals and expectations. In addition, the faculty strives to lead the students to meaningful self-assessment through the use of student literature and writing portfolios. Reflex Math, Moby Max, and other digital tools engage the students in interesting and adventurous ways while increasing the necessary skills for academic improvement. Our over-arching goal is to develop our students to become life-long learners whose critical thinking skills assist them in building a better world.

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

Saint James Catholic School implements the curriculum guidelines set forth by the Diocese of Arlington, which reflect a rigorous and relevant assessment. This dynamic program provides a clear framework for instruction and differentiation and empowers our students to reach their potential.

The English Language Arts program at Saint James is integrated across the curriculum beginning in kindergarten and continuing through eighth grade. Our students receive foundational skills in the primary years, which allow exposure to a language-rich environment to develop creative expression, speaking and listening, writing, language development, and comprehension. Saint James offers an educational experience that prepares students to think critically and develop reasoning skills and problem-solving techniques.

Kindergarten through fifth grade use iPads in the classroom to support reading and language arts skills through a variety of free and purchased apps. Sixth through eighth grade have one-to-one devices in which students utilize a variety of programs to enhance their reading and language arts skills. Students have access to interactive textbooks and online review activities. They build their skills using Google Apps, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Middle school teachers incorporate Chrome Extensions such as Co-Writer, Grammarly, and Read&Write to aid our students in achieving success. Teachers in kindergarten through eighth grade use differentiated instruction to aid students in drawing connections across the curriculum.

Students have the opportunity to develop their creative side and delve into acting through our Drama Club program. Beginning in fourth grade, students have the opportunity to participate in one of two performances as an actor or behind the scenes in stage direction, scenery design, or lighting. In seventh grade as part of our curriculum in Literature, the students read and perform "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. In eighth grade, the students participate in the Diocesan Shakespeare Festival which allows them to learn about Shakespeare, understand his work, and perform for an audience of their peers.

Saint James encourages students to develop a love of writing. Writing here at Saint James begins with letter  
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formation and journaling in kindergarten and progresses through the other grades with age-appropriate research papers and persuasive and creative narratives culminating with more advanced projects in middle school. Our fifth grade publishes a quarterly newspaper that includes feature articles, interviews, poetry, and art. In the past several years students at Saint James have entered contests such as the Catholic Daughters of America Education Contest. We are proud that our students have placed locally and statewide every year. Writing across the curriculum areas is essential at Saint James beginning in the primary grades and continuing through middle school.

Literature at Saint James invites students to go beyond the pages of a book. Students explore the world, experience characters of all kinds, and allow the pages to come alive. Some of the novels that enhance this experience are *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Greenglass House*, *The Outsiders*, and *Night*. Short stories, poetry, and novels allow students to enrich their learning, develop vocabulary, and improve comprehension.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The Saint James Catholic School math curriculum fosters a strong foundation in numerical concepts and skills with a consistent emphasis on number sense and application. Following the Diocesan Mathematics Curriculum Guidelines, our teachers collaborate within their own grade levels and among the other grades to ensure that all skills taught are mastered as students progress through the school's program. The Scantron Performance Series testing provides the teachers with individualized student data three times a year. Using these scores and the data provided identifying each student's strengths and challenges, along with multiple assessment techniques and differentiated resources, our school provides intervention, remediation, and enrichment to all students as they progress from elementary to middle school.

The Sadlier Progress in Mathematics series is the school's primary curriculum. The structure and content of the publisher's materials foster spiral learning, which is in line with our educational philosophy. Furthermore, the program's alternative teaching models and virtual manipulatives supplement the content to strengthen problem-solving, conceptual understanding, and application of all operations and relations. Middle School provides an opportunity for those who qualify to participate in advanced math classes. Following the Diocesan Guidelines and evaluations, students are placed into the regular math course, pre-algebra or algebra beginning in seventh grade. Our students, according to their placement and academic success in these courses, have the opportunity to complete Algebra and/or Geometry by the end of eighth grade. McDougall Littell high school textbooks are used for Algebra I and Geometry maintaining consistency with the curriculum of our local high schools.

Through the generous support of the PTO, our students have access to the online programs Reflex Math and Moby Max at school and at home to increase math fact proficiency. Along with annual updates that focus on differentiation, teachers have participated in webinars to develop greater understanding and interpretation of the data gleaned from Reflex Math. This has, in turn, resulted in the proficiency levels across the grades increasing by 16% during the first two months of school this year. In keeping with our guiding principles, "math maintenance" activities are incorporated into daily lessons to re-enforce skills across elementary and middle school grades. Manipulatives (Cuisenaire rods, algebra tiles, personal whiteboards) and interactive media are used to deepen learning and reach visual, audio, and kinesthetic learners. In addition, the students annually participate in various math contests, such as the Virginia Math League Contest, in which they find challenges as well as success.

Saint James School's strong commitment to developing critical thinkers for the 21st century is a central theme of the school's focus on number sense and authentic discernment to ensure mastery of grade-level standards while promoting content depth and math self-concept. The faculty collaborates together to effectively utilize techniques and activities that have been strengthened through the years as together we engage all students and lead them to success.

#### **1d. Science**

Saint James Catholic School utilizes the Lab Learner Science program which was selected for its hands-on, inquiry-based, interactive approach to Science for kindergarten through eighth grade. As classes visit the lab each week, they have opportunities to explore various topics ranging from weather changes to genetics, which helps foster their curiosity. Students actively participate, working together with lab partners or table groups, to conduct investigations which aid in the development of scientific skills. In our fully equipped lab, students have the opportunity to use a myriad of equipment ranging from test tubes, beakers, and graduated cylinders to triple beam balances, light meters, and microscopes. We recently purchased a dissecting microscope that provides students with a much clearer image of an object, such as a dissected frog or plant cell. Outside technology augments our science equipment as we incorporate online videos and programs such as Quizlet and Brain Pop.

Beginning in kindergarten, students learn to make and record their observations as they are introduced to beginning explorations. Building on material presented in previous years' instruction, students learn to make predictions, form hypotheses, and draw conclusions through observation. As investigations are carried out, students learn to collect and analyze data which can then be presented in graphs, charts, and tables. Mathematics is integrated into science as students create tables, organize data, and perform calculations. Language Arts skills are being developed through the formation of written responses in their lab books and participating in discussions.

To meet the academic needs of the students, teachers modify investigations to enable all to participate. Working with their lab partners or table groups, students learn teamwork and cooperation skills, and steps to effective problem-solving. These lab groups, comprised of students with varying abilities, work together to accomplish required tasks.

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

The Social Studies curriculum offers our students a thorough survey of the world. Beginning in kindergarten with a view of each student's family and neighborhood, this vision continues to grow in each grade to include the larger world of communities, states, countries, and people. In fourth grade, our students start looking at the broader picture as they learn Virginia history. They progress through middle school, expanding their knowledge of American history from pre-Columbian days until the present. Our eighth-grade students' study of government and its purpose helps to develop the skills needed for responsible citizenship. They participate in lively debates as an example of putting their learning into action.

Our teachers, aware that we are located in an area rich in history, ensure that students benefit from visiting, not just reading about, significant places in our nation's history. Our students attend field trips to National Archives, Mount Vernon, US Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, Gunston Hall, Gettysburg, and Baltimore as well as various Smithsonian Museums and national monuments. In addition, our students experience 'live' history as the school participates in interactive and engaging historical annual events, such as presenting biographies of important people in history during the eighth grade's Wax Museum, performing in Greek plays and Olympic Games during sixth grade's Greek Day, making butter, candles, and dancing during the fourth grade's Colonial Day and experiencing a 'rodeo' during Cowboy Week in third grade. Our second grade celebrates a fiesta as a culminating activity for their study of Mexico and the fifth grade's International Day with posters and features of their chosen country provide opportunities to share their knowledge.

The comprehensive goal of the social studies program is to instill in our students a deep understanding of and appreciation for the rich history of our nation and our world.

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

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

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Fine and performing arts cultivate critical thinking, a strong work ethic, personal empowerment, and excitement. The arts at Saint James Catholic School foster personal growth and the ability to explore different approaches to problem-solving. Our students attend weekly art and music classes where they grow in their creativity and innovation while engaged in bookmaking, pottery, scenery design, study of the masters, and personal expression.

Music classes are held weekly for all grades with the focus on singing, dancing, and classroom instruments in kindergarten through second grade. Third through fifth grades learn to play the recorder and sixth through eighth grades participate in guitar lessons. Choir is open to students in third through eighth grades with weekly practices after school and additional rehearsals on performance days. The choir is committed to their ministry to the church, school, and community by sharing God's gift of music. They perform at all school liturgies as well as other school and parish functions.

Our performing arts program includes sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade productions of Greek and Shakespearean plays and A Christmas Carol. In 2018 we began a drama club open to grades four through eight to expand the opportunities for creative expression. The club has two productions a year. All grades participate in the Living Rosary, the Christmas Sing-along and the end of the year Talent Show. Our in-school award-winning band program is open to students in grades four through eight and offers group lessons during the school day, full band practices after school and concerts for the school community. During Fine Arts Night, family and friends enjoy the student artwork displayed throughout the school and then enjoy a mini-concert by our choir and guitar groups.

Physical and health education are coordinated by the PE teacher and school nurse. Together they instruct our students in basic hygiene, health privacy, nutrition, and family life education. Students in kindergarten to fourth grade have PE twice a week while the higher grades have weekly classes. During class, they are engaged in structured physical activities that target large motor skills and promote a quest for lifelong fitness and activity. By playing various games and sports during PE, students learn cooperation, respect, leadership, and problem-solving skills that will serve them in life.

Spanish is taught in all grades with frequency and minutes determined by grade level. Students begin with basic vocabulary which ultimately becomes conversational Spanish. An extensive study of the language and culture in Spanish-speaking countries provides our students with a strong knowledge base preparing them for high school Spanish. Approximately 88% of our students test into Spanish II as high school freshmen.

Our kindergarten through eighth-grade students engage in age-appropriate technology including computers, iPads, laptops, and robotics. Four iPad carts stationed throughout the school provide the opportunity to support students' reading, language arts, and math skills in their classrooms. Middle school students can access interactive textbooks and much of what Google offers through their laptops. Our Robotics Lab provides age-appropriate coding and STEM experiences for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Middle school students participate in the Hour of Code with guest lecturers and hands-on experience which leads to a month-long coding unit. Our computer teacher coordinates with classroom teachers to develop cross-curricular activities in a variety of subject areas.

Our librarian provides instruction in library use and research skills in kindergarten through sixth grades during weekly visits. Read-a-louds and displays are carefully chosen to provide students with a love for the written word and a desire to explore the world of literature. The librarian coordinates with classroom teachers regarding specific projects and tailors her lessons to the project. Research and study skills are introduced as age-appropriate. Support with research projects is available for seventh and eighth grades.

Saint James students participate in various contests, including the Youth Apostles Pro-Life Poster and Essay Contests. Our fifth graders work during and after school on the school newspaper writing and refining feature articles, interviews and creative writing pieces. All grades can participate in Spanish Club and fifth and sixth graders can participate in Battle of the Books. Our after school enrichment program features learning opportunities in bookmaking, dance, creative writing, chess, soccer, and fencing.

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

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

Every school has a variety of academic levels within its student population. Saint James Catholic School benefits from the privilege of a diversity of learning styles and abilities and the many unique opportunities this presents to enhance the educational program of all our students.

Students who perform below grade level are supported primarily, but not exclusively, through the Harrison Center, our school's resource center. This center has two dedicated teachers and one aide. The use of a pull-out program is implemented up to and including eighth grade if needed. Pull-out and support services are provided for students who have met the need for accommodations and/or modifications through educational evaluations. We receive Title I services for those students in first and second grades who qualify. The school community is invested in the academic success of each of its students, especially for those whose academic path is strained by various challenges.

The faculty has worked diligently over the last five years to develop and use classroom instruction and best practices that incorporate differentiation at all levels. Beginning with a year's discussion and implementation of Dr. Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, followed by professional development days focused on bringing differentiation alive in the classroom, teachers have developed a heightened awareness of the needs of each child. In addition to the Harrison Center, a visitor will find a variety of teaching methods and learning activities evident in our school, ranging from direct whole-class instruction to the use of technology tools such as Co-Writer and Learning Ally, to one-on-one work with a parish volunteer, to small group reinforcement, to National Junior Honor Society students tutoring fellow classmates after school. Saint James School continues to focus on the use of the best practices in lifting up our most at-risk students.

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

Saint James Catholic School also has a high number of students who consistently perform above grade level. An advanced mathematics program is in place to challenge students who meet the criteria to move to a higher level of academic success. Students entering into seventh grade are placed on one of three math levels: regular seventh-grade math, pre-algebra or algebra. In eighth grade, these students are then placed in pre-algebra, algebra or geometry. Cross-curricular instruction permeates the school at all grade levels. Our Fine Arts Program joins with the Literature, Social Studies, and World Language departments to allow the students to develop both intellectually and creatively. Annual events such as Greek Day, Colonial Day, the drama festival, Cinco de Mayo Day, and Fine Arts Night offer those students with the interest and drive the opportunity to enter into a more rigorous level of their education. This encourages them to develop higher-level skills and thinking processes.

In addition to these opportunities, our students are often presented with the challenge of entering into contests throughout the year. Students at all grade levels are informed of these contests, including art, writing, and mathematics. Each year we participate in a variety of contests as noted previously. According to their performance, students have the opportunity to advance to the state or national level in several of these contests. With the exception of the Science Fair, participation in each of these contests is voluntary and our advanced students are eager to engage in these additional rigorous activities, thus stretching their learning experiences and achieving well-deserved success and recognition.

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

In 1994, Saint James Catholic School administrators and Mrs. Nancy Harrison established a resource center for students who were struggling or working below grade-level expectations. The goal of the Harrison Center was and continues to be, to provide students with learning challenges the opportunity to remain in a Catholic school environment. The Harrison Center continues to strive to meet the needs of students who are found eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act and students who have been diagnosed with learning, attention, visual, and emotional disabilities through public school or

private testing.

Our resource personnel work closely with the classroom teachers and parents to determine if a child has a possible learning disability. If the need is determined, Falls Church City Public Schools provide testing for them within the Saint James School building. Our parents, classroom teachers, and resource personnel attend the results meeting at the local public school where eligibility for services is determined and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student is developed. The parents are then free to determine the best path for their child. If Saint James School is the school of choice, the Harrison Center team drafts a Student Assistance Plan (SAP) built upon the recommendations of the IEP and then agreed upon with parents and teachers, each adding ideas and/or concerns. Each person involved in the education of the child strives to work together to assist the student in meeting the goals. While the Harrison Center provides primarily a pull-out program, the ultimate goal is to have every student integrated within the general education classroom by seventh grade, where push-in assistance and study hall sessions are employed in an effort to prepare each one for greater success and independence in his or her lifelong learning experience.

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

While Saint James School does not have a formal ELL program, we do have students whose primary language is not English. Teachers make interventions to assist the students such as using visuals and small group instruction while teaching vocabulary at the start of a unit.

If needed, Saint James School would contact Falls Church City Schools to work with their English Language office under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to have a student's English skills assessed and acquire professional development for our teachers.

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

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

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

“The Saint James Catholic School community is committed to educating the whole child within the Catholic faith tradition by promoting academic excellence and service. Imbued with the IHM Charism, where Jesus is the center and Mary is the model, we strive to inspire, lead and challenge our students to fully develop their God-given abilities.” Every aspect of life at Saint James School is measured by the above mission statement. Who we are and who we lead our students to become is centered on the fulfillment of our goal to inspire, lead and challenge our students to fully develop their God-given abilities. To that end, we are first and foremost called to be authentic to the vocation of teaching and all that this call entails.

From the first pre-kindergarten playdate to the eighth-grade farewell breakfast and graduation, our students are formed in a community that is broader than a school mascot or slogan. Yes, as the Saint James Rockets, we are called to “Ignite the world with God’s love!”, but on a deeper and more intimate level, our students are called by the example of parents, teachers, and staff to be a part of a larger community that will bring hope and joy to a brighter world. Through our multi-grade prayer partner program, the middle school house program, tutoring of younger students, our theatrical productions, our annual “shoebox collection” filled with small gifts for students and staff in a needy school in Pennsylvania and other similar activities, our students come to know and appreciate the value of one another as well as the many parents and teachers who give their time to moderate these endeavors.

Parish and PTO events, such as the annual Bazaar in the fall and the Fish Fry each Friday night during Lent, bring the many and varied groups of the parish and school together. These events instill in our students a sense of belonging and accomplishment as they learn the value of working as a cohesive unit to bring about a successful conclusion, often to the benefit of others. As a school community, we believe in the total development of the student. The social and emotional development of our students is the strength that underlies and supports their intellectual growth as they become the positive changes needed in our world each day.

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

Saint James Catholic School places a strong emphasis on building relationships between school, parish, and local communities that help to enrich the learning environment both inside and outside the classroom. As a vital part of our school, volunteers can be found throughout the day in classrooms, library, office, cafeteria, and playground, engaged in a wide variety of activities such as Career Day, Field Day, Nun Fun Run, Breakfast with Santa, Vacation Bible School, and numerous PTO sponsored events, like the Bazaar and the Gala, which are two of their major fundraising efforts for the school. In addition, the PTO also provides guest speakers on a wide variety of topics thereby providing opportunities for parents, family members, and the parish community to be closely involved in the school life of the children.

Saint James School continues to live the spirit of service for social justice with its long history of outreach to the community. Students are made aware of and engage with the larger world community through the school’s connection with Catholic Charities, the Arlington Diocese Mission, Parish Social Outreach, and other organizations. School and parish-initiated programs, such as Christ House meals, St. Lucy Project Food Drive, and First Friday Food Distribution, collections of school supplies and clothing for daycare centers, schools, and families in need are some of the opportunities families have to show action in the service of social justice, and fulfill the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Outside the classroom, family and community members play an essential part in extracurricular activities, such as CYO sports, Scouts, parish choir, lectors, and altar servers which help our students develop their gifts and talents and in turn enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual abilities.

Parents are made aware of student performance on a regular basis through mid-trimester progress reports,

trimester report cards, and Scantron Performance Testing results three times annually. A folder is sent home each week with academic work and informational flyers. Parents of fifth through eighth-grade students can view academic updates on PowerSchool. These reports and forms of communication all help to provide students, parents, and teachers with timely information about student learning. In addition to the November parent/teacher conference, parents are encouraged to contact teachers throughout the year with their questions or concerns. Our principal keeps the school, parish, and local community informed about school activities and student achievements through her Friday Notes, email blasts, the school website, parish bulletin, and Twitter.

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

The faculty of Saint James Catholic School utilizes a variety of resources and opportunities to enhance their own educational expertise. Professional development is at the core of the Office of Catholic Schools' yearly goals for teachers as well as for administration. To accomplish this, Saint James School provides in-house quality professional development days. Professional speakers have been engaged and funded through Title II and school monies. In addition, there are a number of other options that allow our teachers to pursue their interests and advance their teaching techniques. Saint James Parish offers the Clarke-Delaney Teacher Fund to teachers who are pursuing higher education. This fund will pay up to fifty percent of the cost per credit. The Saint James School PTO also provides funds for teacher workshops and conferences. The PTO generously provides funds to expand the classroom experiences of both the teacher and the students.

Most prevalent in Saint James School is the spirit of camaraderie that enhances our school environment and is the building block of a highly positive and energizing climate that impacts every member of the school community. A welcoming smile and ready helping hand are hallmarks at Saint James. Teachers and staff are ready and eager to share ideas and concerns in a concerted effort to enhance the education of each student and the school program in general. It is not unusual to find teachers assisting one another as they navigate new textbooks, resources, and testing materials. Peer learning and observations have been established as goals for the past two years and the teachers embrace this opportunity to glean the best from one another.

Over the past few years, the Diocese of Arlington has acknowledged teachers who have reached milestone years at the initial in-service in August. In an effort to demonstrate our profound appreciation for each of our teachers, the school community recognizes them at our own opening school Mass in October.

Finally, respect, values, and genuine care permeate who we are at Saint James. The creation of a professional culture is the claimed responsibility of each member of the school community. This culture flourishes through the positive energy and dynamic that flows from each member and, most importantly, touches the heart and mind of each child who enters Saint James School.

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

Saint James Catholic School was established in 1906 and has been under the educational leadership of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary since 1923. This is our principal's seventh year at Saint James but prior to that, she visited Saint James annually as the IHM Regional Superior. She understands the charism, history, culture, and goals of the school and works tirelessly to enhance them.

Following guidelines established by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, the pastor and principal work together to provide the organizational leadership of the school. The pastor holds executive and leadership roles in both the parish and the school. He is dedicated to the formation of the mind, body, and soul of every student. Under his leadership, the school strives to meet its spiritual, academic, and fiscal goals. The principal is the spiritual, academic, and administrative leader of the school and as such, her myriad of responsibilities engage her throughout the day and into the evening. Our principal completes many of the administrative tasks associated with her position during non-school hours, thereby allowing her the ability to remain available to her staff, students and parents during the school day.

Academic leadership is readily apparent at our school and does not occur without meticulous planning,

continual prompting, educational training, and academic leadership, all of which are provided by our principal. The faculty are encouraged to develop leadership skills to provide an educational environment that inspires the academic, spiritual, social, and physical well-being of each child. The faculty and staff have weekly and monthly meetings that provide time for prayer, social gathering, and professional development.

The PTO works closely with the school leadership to provide opportunities for teacher development and student enrichment. Members of the PTO Board as well as various committee heads meet regularly with the principal to assess needs and prioritize projects in order to collaborate fully in meeting the fiscal and social responsibilities of the school.

Student leadership is a high priority at Saint James School. Student government, National Junior Honor Society, and the Student Ambassador Program invite and encourage the students to identify and share their leadership abilities through outreach projects, tutoring, and providing tours to prospective students and their families. Safety Patrols and Prayer Partners encourage leadership growth through the good example of older students for the younger ones.

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

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The Saint James Catholic School community is committed to educating the whole child in the Catholic faith tradition by promoting academic excellence and service. Although we are immensely proud of the academic achievements of our students, it is our sense of history and community that separates our school from others.

Instilled with the IHM Charism, where Jesus is the center and Mary is the model, our school benefits from the continuity of the leadership of our Sisters. Traditions, like choosing a member of the Court of Christ the King at our Christmas Sing-a-long as well as the Living Rosary and daily recitation of the Angelus or Regina Caeli, strengthen the bonds of our community.

Knowing that Jesus is the center of our lives, we teach our students that they can have an impact on both a local and a more global basis. Our lower grades pair up with upper grades as prayer partners, attending Mass together and completing projects thereby building a connection between different grade levels. The middle school is arranged in houses named after American saints for projects and team-building competitions which strengthen the bonds of friendship that our students take with them into the future.

We strive for our students to be responsible citizens and carry our sense of community out into the community at large. Our students recognize their responsibility to those who are less fortunate as evidenced by their strong support of school collections of gloves, scarves, and other winter clothing for a local children's center, collecting school supplies and other items in support of a medical mission to the Philippines, support of Catholic Charities during We Care Week, providing Christmas gifts for inner-city school children, mission collections and support of those touched by natural disasters. Additionally, our school community raises funds throughout the year to provide opportunities for students to prepare and serve meals at Christ House, a local shelter. These same honor students also build bonds throughout the school by providing after school tutoring to other students.

The educational goals we have for our students are reaffirmed when our alumni return to visit and share their successes with us. Our goal for a sense of community is also affirmed when our students suggest ways that we can reach out to others and when they demonstrate that they are responsible members of society.

## **PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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

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

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$8584  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$3255

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      3%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      17%