

U.S. Department of Education
2022 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 Dr. Denise Aloma
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Saint Thomas Aquinas High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2801 SW 12th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Fort Lauderdale State FL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 33312-2953

County Broward

Telephone (954) 581-0700 Fax (954) 791-5579

Web site/URL https://www.aquinas-sta.org E-mail sta@aquinas-sta.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

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

District Name Archdiocese of Miami Schools Tel. (305) 757-6241

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 none none
(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, leave .blank*

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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. . For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.)

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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	255	262	517
10	249	245	494
11	258	272	530
12 or higher	244	255	499
Total Students	1006	1034	2040

*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 % Asian
 - 12 % Black or African American
 - 37 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 41 % White
 - 7 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 4%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	66
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	83
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1999
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 26 %

Total number students who qualify: 536

8. Students receiving special education services 7 %

With an IEP or 504: 142 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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>11</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>59</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>50</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>8</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>4</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	105
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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.

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2016	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	99%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%

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 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	499
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	86%
Enrolled in a community college	3%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
Other	9%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1996

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

St. Thomas Aquinas High School (STA), a four-year, college preparatory school, educates young men and women according to the traditions of the Catholic faith. The school seeks to develop each student’s God-given talents in a safe and caring atmosphere of sharing and challenge. Through a comprehensive program of Catholic teachings, quality education, and personal development, STA offers its students religious experiences, academic challenges, innovative approaches, athletic programs, social and cultural opportunities, and service to others.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

Harassment and Discrimination

The school is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person’s protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds, at assignments outside the school, or at school-sponsored events. All students are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student must immediately report the incident to his/her principal. If, however, the principal is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Miami. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the school will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

St. Thomas Aquinas High School (STA) is located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. STA exists within the Archdiocese of Miami Catholic Schools and serves a large geographical range with students traveling from as far north as northern Palm Beach County and as far south as southern Dade County, serving 3 counties. STA's students matriculate from over 80 middle schools, both public and private which accounts for an extremely diverse study body. STA is composed of students from all ethnicities, religions and socioeconomic status, creating the unique culture that is STA. STA is academically competitive in a positive way, working to bring one another up to the highest level. Since students come from so many backgrounds, the one commonality is STA, which has created a culture with unmatched school spirit and support for one another academically, artistically and athletically. Additionally, STA has many students who are multi-generational legacies, which contributes to a very strong alumni involvement.

STA holds at least 4 Open House events to educate future Raider families on the culture and school climate of our school. As a school, STA offers over 39 clubs supporting a variety of student strengths and interests. Each club is actively involved in a cause and works to support the cause through community involvement and raising awareness for the cause with all stakeholders. STA offers 15 National Honor Societies and focus on membership for students who excel academically, artistically and athletically. STA's honor societies students give back to our student body by providing academic support through peer tutoring and positive mentorship for academically struggling students. Peer tutors also earn service hours. In order to promote and engage STA students in extracurricular clubs and honor societies, students facilitate an activity fair and actively recruit new members. Events and meetings are advertised on Blackboard Announcements, on STA's social media accounts and on scrolling televised announcements. Additionally, STA clubs, arts and athletics travel to STA's largest feeder schools and promote college resume building activities early so students know exactly what opportunities are available for involvement at STA. During STA open house events, parents have an opportunity to view showcased activities and programs and to converse with student ambassadors regarding the programs during our Activity Fair. All of STA's clubs, athletics and honor societies are featured on the STA website and have information regarding moderators connected directly to the activity so students are able to reach out and receive additional information. Each club, activity and sport has a social media presence that is shared by STA's primary accounts. STA offers a summer school program, providing STA students with enrichment courses, an opportunity for remediation and future feeder students an opportunity to take a summer course and become acclimated with our campus and curriculum.

As a Catholic school existing within the district of the Archdiocese of Miami Schools, STA is the oldest school in the diocese as well as the largest. Academically, STA stands out from all other Archdiocese of Miami Schools as we continue to have the most National Merit Scholars and National Merit Commended students of any of the schools in the district. STA is one of two STEM accredited programs in the diocese. Additionally, STA's school counseling program is a comprehensive school counseling program that is proactive in nature supporting students academically, social-emotionally and with college and career advisement. STA's school counseling program aligns with the American School Counseling Association national model to ensure our students are supported with intervention backed by data and need.

During the Covid-19 closure, STA transitioned to a flexible schooling model. For families of students who were not comfortable coming back to campus, STA provided a fully-virtual option. Many students chose to return to campus and were offered a hybrid model. STA worked within District COVID guidelines to maintain safe space and monitor STA's capacity on campus, which was achieved through the hybrid model. The COVID protocol academically supported all students needs with virtual and in-person options. When working from home, STA students were expected to be on-time, in uniform and without household distractions. School counselors checked-in with students via google meets. STA students were faced with limited opportunities to take the SAT. Our school offered both in-person and remote Advanced Placement (AP) testing opportunities.

STA was previously a National Blue Ribbon School in 1984 and 1996 which has increased academic interest in our school. STA has continued to add academically rigorous courses to ensure college and career readiness, offering 29 AP courses and 56 college in high school courses through dual enrollment programs

in partnership with St. Thomas University and Barry University- the most in the Archdiocese of Miami Schools. STA has continued to engage our stakeholders through the Office of Institutional Development, which promotes events and fundraisers. STA's administration team supports our faculty with professional development opportunities focusing on academically rigorous curriculum, differentiated instructional strategies, incorporating writing across the curriculum, school-wide Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) and social-emotional learning (SEL). All supports are data-driven and based upon the needs of the school culture.

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:

STA is accredited by Cognia. STA aligns all CORE course curriculum with the Florida Department of Education's Curriculum Planning and Learning Management Systems (CPALMS). STA course curriculum is set to align with college and career readiness, pushing students to carry rigorous courses. Additionally, STA encourages all students to push towards taking 4 years of a world language, 4 of more years of science and enroll in AP and dual enrollment level courses. Through the use of CPALMS, curriculum standards are used by teachers in a deliberate practice to organize and pace all course curriculum. All instructional standards outlined in STA's courses are aligned with CPALMS and Florida's Next Generation State Standards to meet qualifications as college preparatory courses. Through general school-wide staff development meetings and in departmental meetings, instruction staff work closely on the cooperative development of course content, and course pacing guides, and course sequencing to meet all standards and prescribed learner outcome objectives. Staff development, over the prior eighteen months at STA has included options for curriculum development, such as Understanding by Design (UBD) and Differentiated Instruction (DI), both of which target the processes of curriculum design and the delivery of classroom instruction. A variation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), is utilized at STA through which instructional staff share best practices and curriculum tools. St. Thomas has always been forward-looking. About a decade ago, the school began a comprehensive modernization of its campus and instructional methods. Much technology was introduced to augment students' learning. For example, Google Chromebooks were issued to each student and "smart boards" were installed in each classroom as well as in the hallways to broadcast announcements.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The learning standards at STA adhere to Florida Common Core State Standards. In the English Department, AP and dual enrollment courses align with the standards set by College Board and the participating universities. STA conducts an entrance test for placement and academic scholarships. The entering freshmen are placed according to entrance test scores and teacher recommendation. The advisement process continues throughout the students' four years at STA with the goal of increasing rigor across all students.

Differentiated instructional practices are standard throughout the school, targeting the visual, auditory, and manual learners. Students' exceptional needs are communicated to the teachers via the school counseling office and the nurse's offices; teachers tailor their instructional methods, seating preferences, and assessment timing to meet the needs of exceptionalities. Club participation aids in the development of student skills as well; an example would be after-school peer tutoring, run by the National English Honor Society, which addresses student needs and development, and is an opportunity for service hours for the tutors. Explicit instruction begins every instructional unit. STA's school curriculum guide describes targeted developmental skills by quarter in every grade level. Problem-based learning is addressed in the development of student writing and in creative projects. Teachers model both effective and ineffective writing strategies, which the students assess and revise. Presentations and speeches are also problem-based, as the purpose often changes (informative, cause and effect, persuasive, argumentative) and challenges students to orient their skills to meet a variety of conditions. Technology is used in the teaching, development, remediation, and sharing of knowledge. STA uses various programs to engage students and monitor student progress examples include google docs, LitCharts, No Red Ink, Vocabulary.com. and Nearpod. Formative assessments through English include surveys, exit-slips, quizzes, and journaling, which aligns with the broader vision of school curriculum at STA through Common Core. Additionally, Writing Across the Curriculum annual assessments and the infusion of writing in every department with similar assessment standards aligned provides the students with consistency and developmental opportunities in a variety of subject areas is another formative assessment used by English across curriculum areas. To address the needs presented by online learning during the initial shutdown, our school invested in new presentation technology and offered multiple

training sessions for teachers.

At STA, 2 different branches of technology exist; one team set for the hardware, software, and monitoring; and one team dedicated to instructional support and creative approaches to use technology. Assessments may now be accessed on Blackboard from home, if required. Some teachers have included what used to be “in-person” assessments like speeches or presentations to include personal student videos or slide presentations with voice-over via the google meeting. Additionally, the English department has created a "lending library" where students can grab a book in the hallways of STA to continue working on literacy and engagement with books outside of the classroom.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

All courses within the STA Math Department are aligned with state Mathematics standards as set forth in the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards for Mathematics. The Department Chair frequently collaborates with teachers of each specific course to determine which textbook best suits the needs of our students/program while satisfying the curriculum requirements set forth by the state standards. Additionally, the Department Chair provides supervision and advisement for teachers regarding their curriculum and challenging issues with students. Monthly department meetings are held to express and examine any concerns with the text, our school’s curriculum and state standards. Instructional staff work cooperatively to develop course content, pacing, and consistency between sections with regards to daily assignments and assessments. Our math curriculum features advanced mathematical coursework including Dual Enrollment Pre-Calculus, Dual Enrollment Calculus 1, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, Ordinary Differential Equations and Calculus III; STA is the only private school in South Florida to offer Calculus III in high school. Our higher level math students are active leaders in Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society, providing peer tutoring four days a week.

The Mathematics department has implemented the use of MyMathLab, to assist with the creation and grading of nightly assignments, as well as assessments. MyMathLab is aligned with the text and allows for teachers to easily share assignments and assessments to promote consistency within each course, regardless of instructor. Lessons are delivered using varying means of explicit instruction and are reinforced by instructors creating assignments and assessments by selecting specific problems from a pool, with each student being assigned similar questions with slightly different numbers. STA math department is data-driven, which allows instructors to identify areas of general weakness among all students as well as identify specific students’ weaknesses. Data can then be used to differentiate instruction and make adjustments to planning and pacing as necessary.

In the Math department, statistical functions are implemented and offered through the gradebook on Blackboard, STA’s learning platform, as well as the data generated by MyMathLab to identify areas of weakness among all students, as well as identify the needs of specific students. The data are used to determine areas that require remediation, and to assist with planning/pacing for the class. The data, along with student interests and teacher recommendations, are also used to help determine course placement for the following school year.

During the 2020-2021 school year brought many challenges with regards to content delivery, student engagement, and authentic assessment. Within the Math department, teachers were given the freedom to determine the means by which lessons would be delivered and assessments would be administered so that they would provide the smoothest transition for both the students and teachers. Live instruction via Google Meet, instructor-produced lesson videos, or some combination of the two were used most frequently. Engagement on a personal level with the students was unfortunately lost for the most part during this period, as well as effective means of maintaining academic integrity during assessments.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The Science Department operates under an overarching philosophy for course content and standards. Designing curriculum initially focused on the learner outcomes, the deliberate scaffolding of content improves the delivery and retention of core content material. By emphasizing the target content within the

lesson design, a firmer connection is created between classroom instructional activities and content assessments. Over the last three years, department meetings within the school and within the science department have focused on structuring and developing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and providing continuing support of PLC activities. The science department shares content materials within subdisciplines, including discussing best classroom practices, student performance data, and sharing of instructional lessons and student projects.

The scaffolding of STA's science curriculum is modeled on one of three variations, based on a combination of student interests and current level of performance. Students performing above grade-level are given early access to their science courses and an opportunity to participate in accelerated science courses. Student performance data is also a critical factor in course placement as students are provided accelerated opportunities through Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual-enrollment courses. Enrollment in more advanced science courses is determined based on student interest, classroom performance, and teacher recommendation. Students performing at grade level have the flexibility to select additional science courses. Students performing below grade level upon entering our school are provided with a remediation course designed to support the skills needed to perform at grade level within one to two years. All students are required to complete biology and chemistry, along with a third year of an interest-based elective science. Before school, after school and summer enrichment courses in Robotics, Scientific Research, Quantum Computing, Pre-Med, Criminalistics and Medical Forensics, Advanced Marine Biology, Pre-Engineering and Robotics, and Pre-Medicine facilitate real-world STEM experience for our students.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

STA social studies department clearly defines learning standards throughout the school year. By explicitly stating academic objectives in the syllabus for each course, each social studies teacher is provided with a framework to craft a precise learning progression and delineate it to students. History, geography, government, economic, and psychology courses at STA have had tremendous success educating students and garnering a retention of material because of the department's steadfast commitment to ensuring students are acutely aware of each course's content schedule at the beginning of each school year.

Homework assignments administered via Blackboard are widely used among social studies teachers at STA as formative assessments designed to develop students' ability to read and analyze primary and secondary sources. The department enlightens students about the past and cultivates an understanding of the world we live in today, how it has changed over time, and how society has arrived at this moment. Generally, tests are the primary tool by which social studies teachers assess students' retention of material. All teachers are encouraged to review the statistics assessment data to guide construction of lessons that engage the students and convey meaningful content. STA's strongest history students are members of Rho Kappa Honor Society.

The Social Studies Department excels at implementing a present-to-past approach to historical instruction, which strengthens student engagement. Teachers are encouraged to begin lessons with student-based observations about a place, event, or topic in the world today. After students have sufficiently described this topic, teachers then explain historical context which explains why and how this theme came about. The advantages and effects of this method are intertwined. By beginning with something that students observe in today's world, both their interest in and ability to grasp the subject are enhanced. Additionally, students gain an awareness of the gradual nature of developments throughout history.

1f. For secondary schools:

STA provides an opportunity for all students, regardless of starting point, to work toward college and career readiness. Approximately 99% of students graduate with the intention of attending a 4-year university. At STA, 29 AP courses are offered. Students can begin AP courses as early as 9th grade. Approximately 33% of students participate in our AP exams, though fewer students took AP exams during the pandemic, despite the virtual option. Additionally, STA partners with St. Thomas University to offer students 18 Dual Enrollment courses. Both AP courses and Dual Enrollment provide an opportunity to earn college credit in high school. The curriculum provided by AP and Dual Enrollment provides courses for students of all discipline interests to take advanced courses in the Arts, English, math, science, social

studies, theology, technology and world language. Additionally, STA provides opportunities for students to show leadership through 15 honor societies, student government, leadership class, 41 athletic teams, 39 clubs/activities- all of which encourage students to provide community involvement through acts of service. Enrichment courses are offered before school, after school and during summer, providing students an opportunity to become involved in courses that focus on exploring career pathways, including law, pre-med, robotics, independent scientific research, quantum computing, band, theater, choir, photography and leadership. STA operates on a 6 period schedule, so offering extended learning opportunities is essential to provide STA students with career-based exploration, as well as a deeper dive into the Arts. Each year, STA strongly encourages students to get involved in summer programs to strengthen applications and allow students to have a real-life college experience. Each summer, STA provides a college bootcamp for juniors to jumpstart the application process. The college bootcamp did not occur during the pandemic but recent COVID policies will allow for the bootcamp to resume this summer.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

STA is college preparatory with a key emphasis on ensuring students are prepared to enter the real world. STA is all about the A, focusing on Academics, Arts, Athletics and Activities. STA built the Bienes Center for the Arts in 2009 to ensure all aspects of performing arts were supported for STA students. Presenting two plays each year, the STA Drama department produces a fall musical and a spring drama/comedy, utilizing the talents of STA students in all facets of the theater from acting on stage to the behind-the-scenes technical aspects. Students with a passion for dance are able to learn technique, choreography, dance history and an artistic perspective. Through STA's visual arts program, students are able to understand and use the elements of art and principles of design to create artwork in various media. Additionally, photography provides students an opportunity to artistically take photos and edit those photos. To best explore journalism, students have an opportunity to interview, create and edit content for the yearbook. In film studies, students are able to explore the field of film and learn about directing, editing and acting on TV and film. Through technical theater, students are able to gain experience in the actual production piece of television, including the software. Athletics at STA are co-curricular. Academics and athletics support one another. Athletics provides academic interventions and support through mandatory tutoring and communication with the school counseling office to ensure student-athletes are able to succeed in school. At STA, 61% of all students participate in at least one sport. Covid has impacted athletics by contributing to losing games and students getting sick, but STA athletics has endured. Athletics implemented weekly testing, reduced exposure through an athletic bubble, changed the way athletes hydrate, and streamlined practices to reduce risk of exposure to athletes. In order to move STA to supporting a 21st century digitized model, STA created the Innovation Center in 2011-2012. The Innovation Center piloted new applications and technology by digitizing mathematics, cross-curricular collaboration and integrating technology into a non-STEM classroom. All students at STA are required to take at least two years of a world language, though STA encourages continuing with a language all 4 years.. STA provides Spanish, French and Italian courses. Students have the opportunity to take dual enrollment courses and advanced placement level courses in the world language courses to earn college credit. Additionally, STA offers the Aquinas Kindness program which helps our entire student body learn to treat one another with respect, essentially school-wide social-emotional learning. Students actively assist their peers as well as students in middle and elementary school learn essential skills. Through connection, Aquinas Kindness created a space to reduce social isolation and encourage togetherness and connection. Through the skillset delivered by Aquinas Kindness, positive school-wide behavior is encouraged and strategies to succeed are provided. Aquinas Kindness delivers a social-emotional approach to learning. Many STA programs actively compete including dance, choir, band and theater.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Prior to 9th grade entry, each student takes the High School Placement Test (HSPT) and the results indicate the student's performance in the following domains: verbal, reading, language, quantitative skills and mathematics. Results from the exam indicate the grade level at which the student is performing. HSPT results and previous academic records are used to place students within the STA curriculum. STA's curriculum offers several course levels including remedial courses in English, math, science, social studies, world language and theology to support students performing below grade level. Each content area works to differentiate instruction for students performing below grade level to ensure students are able to understand core concepts while working at a slightly slower pace. Additionally, the English department has put in place the intervention "Writing Across the Curriculum" that implements writing in MLA format across all content areas. Writing is taught to students based on common guidelines and rubric that teachers across all content areas use. This program supports students performing below grade level to develop the writing skillset across content areas to raise their performance to grade level. Data supports the goal of students increasing rigor each year indicating STA's tiered system of instruction successfully provides the support needed for students to increase rigor. Additionally, STA provides peer tutoring across all content areas, which is available to all students before school and after school. The Office of School Counseling & College Advisement is proactive in nature, intervening with students whose grades fall below a D, facilitating academic and social-emotional interventions. When students are struggling, counselors connect with parents and teachers and recommend students attend tutoring. Counselors also provide organization and time-management strategies. If need be, counselors facilitate parent-teacher conferences to provide strategies for organization and planning and works to bridge the gap between school and home. Daily, students are provided with "Primetime" instruction for ten minutes which allows the entire school to complete test prep with support from teachers.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At STA, students scoring in the 95th percentile or higher on the High School Placement Test are admitted to the competitive Veritas Scholars program, which is a school-based academic scholarship program. Veritas Scholars receive academic mentoring from a specific counselor who assists with students who are gifted. Veritas Scholars receive preferential scheduling, preferential course registration and academic advisement to ensure they are able to take the most rigorous course schedule available in alignment with each student's individual interests. Veritas Scholars receive specialized college and career advisement and access to programs, such as SAT/ACT tutoring, to ensure ample opportunity to prepare to be the most competitive academic students possible. Veritas Scholars are also provided access to enrichment summer programs through our Summer Institute. Veritas Scholars must maintain certain achievements, including certain scores on the PSAT/NMSQT, 40 community service hours per school year and a minimum 4.5 weighted GPA. Through these enrichment opportunities, many STA students performing above grade level have been recognized as National Merit Semi-Finalists, National Merit Commended Students, National Hispanic Recognition Program, National African American Recognition Program, National Indigenous People Recognition Program and AP Scholars; the most students in the Archdiocese of Miami Schools. Additionally, students performing above grade level are encouraged to begin service projects to work toward becoming a Silver Knight Award nominee. STA students have continuously performed strongly at the Silver Knights competition, often winning or receiving honorable mention.

3c. Special education:

STA provides exceptional student services (ESS) for those who qualify. At STA, qualifying students are eligible to receive official accommodations plans when a documented medical diagnosis with recommended accommodations is provided. Qualifying diagnoses include medical, mental health, learning disabilities and physical disabilities. STA provides eligible students with 50% or 100% extended time on tests and quizzes, depending on the doctor's recommendation. Additionally, some students may be eligible for preferential seating. Once a student is eligible for services, a meeting is held and parents are provided with the accommodation plan. Once the plan has been signed by the parents, teachers are notified immediately so services can begin. Additionally, all students with accommodations are noted in our student database with a direct link to their accommodation plan. Students performing below grade level are able to be scheduled into academic courses that have remediation strategies embedded into the curriculum. The goal of these "push" classes is to push students to grade level and bridge any gaps in learning that may exist for the student. These classes are available for all students who qualify based on their academic record, not just students

with accommodations. Students who are eligible for accommodations also receive these accommodations on all standardized tests including SAT, ACT, PSAT, Pre-ACT and AP exams. One counselor is trained through on-going professional development, workshops and trainings to ensure accommodations are provided with fidelity. The counselor communicates directly with parents, scheduling parent-teacher conferences as needed. Accommodation plans are reviewed yearly and updated as recommended by the doctor. Additionally, the counselor provides counseling services to eligible students, behavior plans as needed and partners with the nurse for medical concerns. The counselor ensures students with accommodations are met with a collaborative approach including family, teachers, counseling, outside providers and administration.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

STA has developed a positive school climate, fostering a sense of belongingness amongst students, faculty, community and alumni. School spirit has transformed the halls of STA into a magical place driven by student engagement. Academically, STA supports students by encouraging participation in a rigorous curriculum, encouraging students to increase rigor throughout high school. Our school has 15 National Honor Societies which provide opportunities for leadership, mentorship and academic excellence. Roughly 40% of upperclassmen are enrolled in at least one honor society, which indicates a school climate that promotes academics, as well as involvement in the arts and athletics. Each of our honor societies work to tutor students in need and to engage the community through fundraising opportunities for charities. An example of a major engagement activity that involves the entire school and is chaired by the National Honor Society is our Dance-a-thon, which has raised thousands of dollars for cancer research. Though the pandemic changed many in-person opportunities for school activities, our school has over 39 clubs which appeal to a wide variety of students which has led to a 90% participation rate, despite the pandemic. Through Athletics, our school has a 61% participation rate, many students participating in multiple sports. STA is currently ranked 1st in the state of Florida for Athletics with 119 State Championship titles, and has been recognized by MaxPreps as the best athletic program in the country. Through our leadership program, students learn leadership strategies which provides a unique opportunity for students to motivate students to become involved in our school's culture. Our AP participation rate is 33%, which was significantly impacted during the Covid-19 shutdown, however, our school provided many options for testing including on-campus and virtual test options. Our as students The Office of School Counseling & College Advisement operates from a comprehensive school counseling model in alignment with the American School Counseling Association standards and competencies for mindset & behavior. STA's College Advising Department pushes into classrooms quarterly to ensure students are well-informed and actively planning for post-secondary goals. STA's Office of School Counseling and College Advisement provides daily updates on Instagram, sends monthly communication to students and parents, provides a monthly scholarship bulletin, and most importantly aims to build rapport with each student on campus. During the pandemic, individual counseling meetings, large group presentations, parent nights, college visits and college fairs were all held virtually, which ensured our students did not lose the opportunity to remain engaged and informed about postsecondary options. In wake of COVID-19, many STA students suffered the loss of loved ones, and STA ministry in partnership with STA counseling created the "Circle of Hope" which has served as a support system for grieving students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

STA recognizes the importance of including all stakeholders in the education process. The partnership between STA and parents is fostered and recognized as essential to the success of our school community. Parents are actively involved in our school community and play a large role in organizing events, activities, community service projects, providing supervision at all of these events, supporting fundraising opportunities and partnering for the success of our STA. STA partners with families to help all students attain their educational goals while helping students become Catholic men and women which learning to act with responsible human freedom, as taught by our student handbook. The STA Office of Institutional Advancement works to engages alumni, parents and members of the STA community work together to provide opportunities for students to engage in large group presentations and real-world experience for career pathways. Students have an opportunity to participate in leadership class, which fosters school community development through participation in ongoing service projects. Through community partnerships, STA has worked to engage a strong network of parent volunteers who assist with the success of all events on campus. Additionally, STA partners with several community organizations which ensure our students are able to give back to the community and form meaningful relationships within the community. STA also partners with the Bougainvillea House, an organization designed to assist with mental health in adolescents. STA actively partner with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, which works to ensure our students are safe during the school day and during events. Through the Principal's Advisory Board, innovative ideas are discussed and decisions are made to ensure the school is functioning as a top college

preparatory school. Each year, STA partners with all stakeholders and holds the STA annual auction. The STA auction is a wonderful way for alumni to partner to raise money for an approved cause. Last year, the funding from the auction went toward improvements in safety and security on campus. This year, in wake of the mental health implications from the pandemic and a high-need to provide additional support, the auction funds will be put toward health and wellness.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

STA Administration actively works to provide an environment where all staff and faculty feel valued and appreciated. In order to support staff, administration partners directly with stakeholders who often offer generous donations as a means to organize events to show appreciation for staff. During holidays and other recognition events, faculty is appreciated and thanked through gift cards, luncheons and off-campus appreciation events. Many opportunities are provided for staff to earn extra stipends through student service's initiatives which are designed to provide supplemental opportunities for students in the areas of academics, arts and athletics. Teachers are encouraged to present Administration with innovative ideas and Administration partners with faculty to formulate a plan for success if the idea fits the school's vision. During each season, active parents decorate the faculty lounge and provide daily treats and coffee to show appreciation for staff. Administration supports staff by assigning leadership personnel to various areas of expertise, ensuring faculty know who to seek if they need support. In the area of Academics, an Administrator is assigned to support all academics on campus. Academics are supported through an Administrator led Academic Council which allows educators to collaborate across curriculum areas and in turn bring strategies back to each curriculum area's professional learning community. An additional Administrator is over personnel, providing support for teachers in terms of problem-resolution, instructional growth and hiring. An Administrator is also over activities, and organizes activities for staff as well as supports staff in organizing activities. During the pandemic, faculty needed a variety of support, largely differing from what was needed in the past. STA provided the option for students to operate on a hybrid school model or to work completely remote. Many professional development opportunities were provided for teachers including support with technology, sharing successful and innovative teaching strategies during the hybrid teaching duration, recognizing teachers who supported their peers and provided a foundation for others during the pandemic. Additionally, an Educational Technology Specialist was available on-campus for teachers as a support for questions, trainer for new and existing virtual platforms and pioneer for virtually diverse teaching strategies. STA makes a valiant effort to be candid with all stakeholders in regards to the school's vision and policy. STA partners with stakeholders to receive honest feedback and continue to make continuous improvements based on the ever-changing needs of the STA community.

4. School Leadership:

STA has a strong leadership model with a diverse Administration Team and middle-level administrators available to support all stakeholders. The Principal actively oversees all Administration and provides innovative ideas, support and input regarding all areas required to make STA function and thrive as the premier college-preparatory Catholic school of South Florida. Administration is further broken down into an Assistant Principal who oversees all academics, including curriculum and certification. Another Assistant Principal oversees personnel and technology, which includes support for teachers, hiring, and problem-resolution for personnel. Additionally, an Assistant Principal oversees activities and public relations to ensure STA is able to support our staff and engage with all stakeholders. An Assistant Principal oversees behavior, Covid Policy, safety/security and compliance. STA has two deans who are over discipline and attendance, working to ensure students are provided with interventions and support upon return for disciplinary issues. Additionally, STA is supported by a Director of Guidance who oversees a Comprehensive School Counseling Program supported by behaviors and mindsets of the American School Counselor Association National Model. STA has a Director of Admissions who oversees the process of admitting close to 800 new students each year across grade levels. The Instructional Technology Specialist oversees the implementation and integration of new and existing technology, and provides support for faculty and students. STA's new teacher program is overseen by our Director of New Teachers who supports new teachers and staff members transitioning to our school from other educational institutions. STA has ten department chairs who oversee a portion of our academic curriculum and support a professional learning community of teachers. Additionally, STA has a Director of Writing across the Curriculum who

supports all curriculum areas in assisting students in becoming proficient in writing. Additionally, STA has an Athletic Director who oversees an athletic program in which 60% of STA students participate, as well as the diverse coaching staff who support those athletes. STA has 10 Academic Department Chairs who meet monthly to discuss instructional leadership strategies under the advisement of STA's Academic Assistant Principal. STA's Leadership Team meets bi-weekly to discuss upcoming activities, initiatives, concerns and policies. STA is driven by policies that have been developed by the Archdiocese of Miami Schools as well as our school's Administrative manual. Additionally, 28% of STA's faculty are alumni, which provides a strong foundation for stakeholder involvement in the school's leadership team.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At STA, a group of educators and students created the Diversity, Inclusivity, and Sensitivity Committee (DISC). DISC is comprised of staff and students who are interested in creating a school environment that is inclusive and operating from a lens of social justice. With the creation of the DISC at STA, the school community was provided with a means to love and Affirmation of the many unique layers of the entire student body through a variety of discussions, events, and activities meant to focus on the overall inclusiveness of all STA students regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. DISC allowed STA to experience a greater feeling of belongingness and promoted increased camaraderie with fellow high school students despite their racial and ethnic differences. DISC was organized in the following three-tiered functional system to accommodate participation from a myriad of interested school stakeholders: (1) faculty and staff; (2) freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior high school students; and (3) parents and school community members. Through the Theology department, bimonthly virtual faculty meetings via Google Meet to discuss pertinent issues related to diversity, inclusivity, and sensitivity at STA. The DISC Club reached out to the STA student body with a message of unconditional love and inclusion by planning school wide events like after-school meetings via Google Meet and community supply drives to promote cultural diversity and inclusivity at STA. Community Stakeholders included their feedback in the development of the DISC Initiative at STA. All participants in the DISC initiative received training through the Children's Services Council of Broward County who has trained members on inclusive behaviors to model in the classroom and in the school community. Training included frequency of contact, proper weekly discussion topics, and a general review of the expectations of a DISC Initiative member. Furthermore, all school stakeholders involved in DISC Initiative at STA underwent a complete training program that fully explained the goals of the schoolwide diversity program as well as suggestions to promote constructive conversations with STA students about the full implementation of the program at the school. DISC helped to foster a school climate which supports and encourages equity for all students, some activities include Women in Distress baby supply drive, Haiti Earthquake supply drive, Black History Month Lesser Known Figures on campus-wide announcements, teacher appreciation letters of support, Women's History Month educational videos and monthly meetings to discuss pressing issues on campus and come up with possible resolutions.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

STA is one of only two schools in the Archdiocese of Miami Schools that is STEM certified. The science department at STA offers 7 Advanced Placement courses, 4 Dual Enrollment courses and several career pathway courses including Pre-Medical, Robotics, and Independent Research. STA provides an Anatomage table where students have an opportunity to explore projections of full-length views of a human cadaver. The technology is touch sensitive and provides students a life-like exploration of dissection of humans as well as other animals. Through Robotics, students compete through FIRST Robotics Competitions, using engineering skills to create functional robots. STA's Independent Research course allows students to utilize the scientific method to create a hypothesis and then through research determine outcomes. Independent Research began in 2015, during which 3 STA students qualified to compete at the state level. Despite the limitations presented by Covid, in 2021, all competing STA students placed at the county level, and one STA student received honorable mention at States. Students in Independent Research have competed internationally, with one student placing 4th in the world at the International Science Fair, INTEL ISEF: Translational Science with the Project title: Leveraging the Antimicrobial Properties of J. Curcas in Suture Engineering. Other noteworthy research includes a sociological study to reduce school shootings by identifying root causes, creation of a fuel cell from the energy produced from water, researched cancer and formulated a way to predict various types of cancer, studying if fracking correlates with earthquakes, filtering water through bamboo seeds, modeling how to prevent red tide from occurring, purifying air and many more noteworthy researches. The STA Independent Research program has been recognized by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association) the American Psychological Association, The Waterhouse foundation award, NASA, The Naval Academy, Florida Association of Science teachers and received the Genius Olympiad award. STA's STEM program has ensured STA students have every opportunity for advancement in the STEM field and has allowed STA to provide experiential opportunities for students interested in medicine, engineering, computer science, mathematics, pharmaceuticals, actuarial science and many other STEM pathways.

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? \$0
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$0
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 14%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 25%

PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)¹. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup² in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments³).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

¹ Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

² Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

³ Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)