

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

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

School Mailing Address 2516 Alexandria Pike
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Southgate State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 41071-3298

County Campbell

Telephone (859) 441-0449 Fax (859) 441-1742

Web site/URL https://school.sainttherese.ws E-mail boruskek@sainttherese.ws

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* Mrs. Kendra McGuire E-mail KMcGuire@covdio.org

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

District Name Diocese of Covington Tel. (859) 392-1500

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Jennifer Ruschman
(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	13	13	26
K	7	7	14
1	5	9	14
2	5	6	11
3	9	5	14
4	8	8	16
5	7	9	16
6	4	8	12
7	13	5	18
8	8	9	17
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	79	79	158

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 94 % White
 - 4 % 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: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	144
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %

Total number students who qualify: 19

8. Students receiving special education services 8 %

With an IEP or 504: 12 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</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>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. 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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 12:1

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	97%	98%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

To challenge each student to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ, achieve academic excellence, and make a positive difference in the world.

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

Saint Therese Catholic School admits students of any sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national and ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, school-administered programs, and employment practices.

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

Located in Southgate, Kentucky, Saint Therese School is the definition of a family. Students, parents, teachers, and staff all care about one another and are supportive of each other. Teachers consider the student's background when looking for ways to support and help them be successful. The staff members are involved and concerned about the students on a personal level, too. The dedicated volunteer base ranges from parents to grandparents to alumni. Many of the volunteers do not have their own children in the school which speaks volumes about the quality of the school and what a pleasure it is to be a part of it. The family feel of the school extends beyond the walls of the building to include the parish and the community of Southgate as a whole.

The leadership of Saint Therese School has changed in the last three years. The new principal, a 20-year veteran of the school, assumed the role with great energy and pride. She has continued to encourage students to live out the school mission statement, which is to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ, achieve academic excellence, and make a positive difference in the world. This change in leadership has inspired the faculty to evaluate what and how they teach. The faculty of Saint Therese School is committed to guiding each student to reach his or her full potential. With the help of a local university, aligning the curriculum across all grade levels in order to close the achievement gap became the uppermost priority. Teachers are instructing students in a more targeted way to ensure important standards are being met. This is evidenced by the implementation of a schoolwide Accelerated Reader reading initiative, the integration of Moby Max into the curriculum to help fill gaps in reading and math, and the introduction of a STREAM (Science Technology Reading Engineering Art Math) curriculum/classroom. All of these changes have been supported by the addition of an intervention teacher to help close the learning gaps of students.

The principal began her new role by continuing many of the programs and traditions that have made Saint Therese a wonderful place for decades. Students and their families take pride in being Mustangs in various athletic activities. This Mustang pride extends to the Academic Team, schoolwide Spelling Bee, and the statewide Governor's Cup Academic Competition. Students are given other opportunities to develop social skills through book clubs, Chess Club, and Student Council.

The faculty and students were excited to implement new ideas and initiatives in the 2019-2020 school year, which was the principal's first year. As with all schools, plans were temporarily halted in March of 2020. In March 2020, the faculty, staff, and students all quickly adjusted from in-school instruction to virtual learning. Teachers worked together across content levels to create schedules for synchronous, active engagement lessons. A schedule was developed for each grade level, Google Meets were used to meet daily with students, online lessons were posted, and parents were contacted if students began to struggle academically or emotionally. The use of various websites, such as Flipgrid, was beneficial for all learners. To ensure all students had access to technology, a program was implemented that allowed students to borrow Chromebooks. To meet the needs of students socially, fun activities were developed to add to the curriculum. Teachers baked, created scavenger hunts, had snow measuring contests, and incorporated the holidays through special dress days. All teachers were present during parent pick-up/drop-off days. Teachers also made themselves available in the evenings to accommodate parents who had questions or concerns regarding academic subjects or a student's emotional well-being.

The vision for Saint Therese School has been reintroduced. Activities that were canceled in 2020, such as a school musical and a family art night, have been planned for this year. Traditions that began under the new principal, such as family STREAM Night and Christmas Literature Night will also continue. With the help of the dedicated Mother's Club parent organization, Trunk or Treat and "Morning Morsels with Mustangs" have already taken place this year.

The school mission statement fits in perfectly with a quote that is painted on the wall of the main hallway, "Proclaim Christ through simple acts of kindness." These words were spoken in a homily by the former pastor who passed away this summer. He was a model of how all people should want to live their lives. Following his example, an initiative to reinforce the positive behavior of students throughout the school was implemented. One example of this is Model Mustang of the Month. Faculty and staff nominate students who

perform good deeds by submitting a form with the child's name and the reason he or she is being nominated. Students' names are then randomly selected each month and are acknowledged with their pictures and good deed posted in the main hallway.

The students, staff, parents, and parishioners embody the academic and service-oriented nature of Saint Therese School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Saint Therese School prides itself on high academic standards to ensure that all students attain academic excellence for successful high school preparation and beyond. Saint Therese School's core curriculum is based on a curriculum framework provided by the Diocese of Covington along with the Kentucky Academic Standards. Student performance is monitored and analyzed using results from the Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP (Measures of Academic Process) tests.

Saint Therese School faculty implements research-based, best instructional practices across every grade level and content for students. The school climate is student-centered and collaborative. Saint Therese faculty address learning differences through differentiated instruction and targeted response to intervention strategies. Curriculum updates and revisions are data-based. Individualized instruction is derived from formative assessments in individual classrooms at each grade level. Student growth is measured using MAP data. Professional development is not only encouraged, but funded and supported for all aspects of the school community. Professional development over the 2020-2021 school year involved technology training in using Google Classroom to offer all students a learning platform, whether they were participating in face-to-face learning or virtual, synchronous learning opportunities. Faculty also participated in Professional Learning Community professional development in an effort to address some achievement gaps indicated by 2019-2020 MAP data.

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

The Reading/Language Arts programs are integrated to provide a holistic approach to the literacy curriculum and encompass reading, writing, speaking, and listening across all grade levels. The kindergarten reading program, a whole language approach, guides students through phonological awareness, decoding, sight words, and comprehension practice in conjunction with an early introduction to the writing process through reader's notebooks.

Intentional literacy instruction continues in grades one through eight. Grades one through four use the Journeys and Voyages reading series, in which readings and instructional activities are aligned with the KAS. The lessons address the KAS standards students are expected to master at their grade level. In addition to the Journey's reading series, teachers use supplemental materials to reinforce and/or differentiate reading content. These supplements include, but are not limited to, sight word instruction, writing reflections, and additional reading skill-based materials.

Students in grades five through eight also use the Voyage curriculum for English. Reading and writing standards are taught through short stories, informational and persuasive readings, and poetry. This approach provides opportunities for real-world applications and prepares students for high school English and real-world reading. Saint Therese School uses this Reading/Language Arts program to provide students with strategic, scaffolded instructional opportunities for engaging the students in active reading, critical thinking, critical analysis, and problem-solving practices.

Using MAP assessment, teachers work closely with the reading intervention specialist to identify students who are performing below grade level. The intervention teacher implements both the Reading Mastery Program and Novels Program. Both programs use direct instruction to help students develop and reinforce the foundational skills and strategies to become successful readers.

Teachers also use MAP scores to assign developmentally appropriate yet challenging AR levels and goals. This schoolwide reading program has positively impacted students' reading ability, which is proven by increased MAP scores last year. Students are incentivized to exceed their goals, earning participation in the

AR store on a quarterly basis. A reading culture within the school community was intentionally created to ensure students meet or exceed, their reading levels.

Class sets of leveled chapter and picture books have been purchased for every classroom to allow an accessible book collection for all students regardless of reading level. Each classroom holds over 1,500 leveled books.

In working with the district high school, teachers in grades five through eight adopted the Membean Program for vocabulary development. The lessons are individualized and help target learning deficits. Students in grades five through eight are also taught basic Greek and Latin roots in both Science and Language Arts classes for additional vocabulary development.

During the 2020-2021 NTI academic school year, teachers learned to better differentiate assignments through an online assessment. Teachers began using tools such as Google Forms for daily oral language activities to target students with specified learning disabilities, as well as the gifted and talented, in meeting their needs by providing assignments suitable for all learning levels. Saint Therese School is committed to ongoing school-wide initiatives for differentiation training opportunities to meet individual student needs.

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

Over the past two years, the math curriculum has been vertically aligned from preschool through eighth grade. This was accomplished by working with the local university and through PLC meetings. This work has allowed teachers to find gaps in areas where content overlapped and cover content that may not be addressed in the textbooks but is part of grade-specific test standards. It also allowed teachers to bypass the content that had already been mastered at a previous grade level. Teachers are more intentional about covering the necessary material for their specific grade level, along with understanding grade-level expectations for content mastery.

GO Math! is used in grades kindergarten through fourth. Teachers use an engaging and interactive approach to build a solid foundation that allows students to be successful learners. Math facts fluency is started in first grade and continues through eighth grade to ensure all students achieve mastery of all basic math facts. Grades five through eight use a rigorous, advanced curriculum that includes geometry, statistics, probability, pre-algebra, and algebra. The curriculum includes real-life applications of math concepts where manipulatives are frequently implemented to reinforce concepts. Students in grades five through eight are taught how to use a calculator properly for advanced math concepts. Due to COVID-19 repercussions, the intervention teacher targets math concepts that have not yet been mastered. Teachers also differentiate tests based on each student's skill level.

Technology is used to reinforce math concepts. Math videos created by teachers and online math manipulatives are frequently used. Moby Max, an online learning tool, has been implemented in grades one through eight. MobyMax lessons are differentiated by ability levels. It requires students to review weak areas and challenges those who are ready for more difficult concepts at every grade level. Over the summer, MobyMax was used as an incentive for students. This program was used to encourage students to practice math skills to prevent the summer slide. Prizes were awarded for students completing the highest number of minutes for the months of June, July, and August. Teachers also use Khan Academy to advance students who have mastered skills and to target gaps as well.

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

Students from preschool through eighth grade are taught science with a curriculum that blends traditional learning with an inquiry-based approach. Saint Therese uses two science textbook series to meet these goals. Both of the textbook series are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The ScienceFusion curriculum series is used in kindergarten through fifth grade. This series has a mix of online learning with traditional textbooks that can be easily differentiated. Students in grades six through eight use the Pearson Realize book series. The online component in both book series was instrumental in

creating quality instruction during times of non-traditional instruction last school year. While the textbook curricula guide lessons, teachers regularly supplement with videos and hands-on activities to reinforce concepts that the students might not immediately grasp.

Teachers employ various types of formative assessment, such as online assessment games and exit slips to check for student understanding. Hands-on activities help students gain a better understanding of concepts while also allowing teachers the opportunity to interact with students and provide them with meaningful feedback. Intentionally scaffolded instruction guides students through higher-order thinking skills to work through the scientific method as well as engineering design process concepts.

The creation of the STREAM Lab has been instrumental in giving all teachers a space to carry out hands-on activities. Having a dedicated space for labs makes it easier for teachers, but it also builds excitement for students when they get to participate in the STREAM Lab. Students acquire and develop foundational skills of observing, inferring, recording, predicting, and analyzing for scientific inquiry projects. Due to the addition of engineering standards to NGSS, students throughout the school participate in STEM challenges throughout the year. The scientific method is reinforced in middle school through the annual science fair. Students use higher-order thinking to investigate a question, analyze results, and draw conclusions.

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

The social studies curriculum, aligned with the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Framework, uses a wide variety of resources, such as textbooks, primary resource documents, and technology. Students are expected to learn about the nation's history and have an understanding of important historical events that have shaped the country. World history is also explored, and students use higher-order thinking to compare ancient civilizations and draw connections with today's society. Throughout all grade levels, students incorporate reading about current events to engage students while also integrating nonfiction reading skills.

Through the use of hands-on activities, dramatizations, research projects, and maps, students learn to critically analyze historical events and explore the relevance of these events to their lives and to the modern world. In middle school, there is an emphasis on written communication. During each unit of study, students complete a research paper using various resources, with an emphasis on primary sources and using correct citation methods.

Civic learning and responsibility are linked to direct community engagement. Students in seventh and eighth grades learn about and participate at the local city council at Youth Government night. Each Veteran's Day, students hear from a guest speaker who is a military veteran; eighth-grade students give of their time to place American flags on the graves of veterans at a nearby cemetery. Fourth-grade students attend a field trip annually that teaches about agriculture and natural resources. The teacher reinforces what is learned on this field trip through interdisciplinary science and social studies lessons, allowing students to make connections to their daily lives.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Saint Therese School implemented a four-year-old preschool program in August of 2020 and a three-year-old preschool program in August of 2021. The core curriculum consists of religion, language, literacy, mathematics, art, science, and social studies. Preschool students are also introduced to additional content classes such as physical education, Spanish, library, music, and technology classes weekly. The curriculum allows teachers to interact with children in ways that promote development and learning.

The preschool curriculum is aligned with kindergarten through third grade academic standards and allows for teacher-student interaction to promote development and learning. Teachers meet regularly to collaborate

to ensure developmental benchmarks are achieved. As preparation for success in kindergarten, reading and math readiness skills are highlighted through letter and number recognition, as well as letter sounds.

The most important goal of the preschool program is to construct independent learners in a classroom community and introduce basic life skills; these skills include how to interact with other children, routines, and school expectations at an age-appropriate level. Teachers implement bi-weekly modification of play-based centers for student engagement where all activities follow the weekly theme. Children are consistently engaged in learning and play promoted by the use of all their senses.

When COVID-19 shut down kindergarten through eighth grade from Thanksgiving through Christmas break of 2020, the preschool students were able to continue in-person learning. This opportunity was a huge advantage for the preschool students, as there was no learning loss. Using the Brigance test at the end of the 2020-2021 academic school year, 98% tested at, or above, kindergarten readiness.

The St. Therese preschool program is an energetic, cheerful component of the school. It sets the stage for growth, development, and learning that carries into grades well beyond the program.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

St. Therese School's curriculum extends beyond core subjects for all students. As a Catholic institution, Religion is central to the school curriculum. The religious curriculum, Spirit of Truth, focuses on forming character traits, strengthening faith, and instilling knowledge about the Catholic Church. Daily lessons include scripture, Church doctrine, and living out our faith. First through eighth grades attend Mass every Friday. Students actively participate as servers, lectors, choir members, and gift bearers.

While many schools are forced to eliminate school libraries, Saint Therese's library is thriving. Students attend weekly to check out or renew books and are encouraged to stop in throughout the week for a quiet place to read or for a book discussion with the librarian. Classroom teachers work with the librarian to create art lessons that serve as culminating projects for language arts units. Each March, the library is the center of activities through a school-wide integrative unit surrounding the Iditarod sled dog race in Alaska. The library promotes a strong reading community and is a defining part of Saint Therese School.

The use of technology is vital to all grades at St. Therese School. Google Workspace for Education tools such as Docs, Slides, and Google Classroom are used throughout all grades. Teachers employ review games such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and Blooket. Students have access to virtual labs in science class and online assessments in reading. Once a week kindergarten through eighth-grade classes have STREAM Class in the STREAM Lab. In this class, primary grades practice hand-eye coordination by using a mouse along with learning the basics of word processing. As their computer skills improve, students in middle school learn concepts ranging from how to use spreadsheets to video editing. Coding is taught to all students through Kodable, Tynker, and Scratch.

Students have one dedicated art class and two dedicated music classes weekly. In art class, students work with a variety of multimedia resources and receive instruction based on skill level and interest. This work culminates in a Family Arts night where students display their work and families interact at various art stations. In music class, students learn basic music theory and styles through the use of instruments, including bucket drumming, handbells, and recorders. All students in the primary grades take part in a Christmas music program, and middle school students participate in a spring musical.

The Physical Education curriculum exposes students to an active lifestyle to reinforce healthy habits around physical activity. Students attend PE twice a week. Weekly health classes include lessons about nutrition, mental health, and other relevant topics.

Through the Spanish curriculum, students develop a fundamental understanding of the Spanish language, basic vocabulary, and conversational phrases to provide a foundation for high school study. Spanish is also incorporated into classes in the preschool through fourth grade. Beginning in fifth grade, students use Duolingo to gain a better understanding of Spanish vocabulary. Seventh and eighth graders have Spanish

classes once a week to develop conversational proficiency.

Fourth through seventh-grade students have a weekly chess class. Through chess, students develop logic and learn problem-solving skills. Students also have the opportunity to participate in Chess Club, which culminates in a school-wide tournament in the spring.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

All teachers work diligently to differentiate and tier instruction to meet the needs of all students. Using both formative and summative assessments such as MAP, Google Forms, exit slips, and Kagan strategies, teachers are constantly monitoring student progress to meet the needs of all learners.

To help close any achievement gaps, two intervention teachers work closely with all classroom teachers. Students in grades kindergarten through fourth-grade work with an elementary intervention specialist, and students in grades five through eight work with an intervention teacher.

Saint Therese has implemented the Reading Mastery Program for grades K-2 for students performing below grade level. The program uses direct instruction to help students develop the foundational skills and strategies, such as phonemic awareness, to become successful readers. The program provides decoding, as well as reading fluency and reading comprehension, as the students continue throughout the program. Reading Mastery program reading/sound checkouts are given every five lessons to ensure mastery. After reviewing the data, the groups are altered if needed.

The Novels Program is offered to students in grades three and four during the Reading Intervention Block to small groups of students performing below grade level. The program provides short novel studies which introduce students to popular series of children's chapter books. The goal is to establish confidence in young readers who are working in Direct Instruction reading programs to become better independent readers. The Novels program includes a vocabulary notebook with each new Chapter Book. The students develop a notebook that requires the students to write meaningful definitions and sentences to be sure the students understand and develop the vocabulary within the books they read.

Students in grades five through eight work closely with the Middle School intervention teacher. This teacher collaborates with all middle school teachers to ensure students who are performing below grade level are identified. The intervention teacher spends time in the classrooms to support instruction and works one-on-one with students to reinforce lessons. A homework center has also been implemented this school year to support these students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students labeled as gifted and talented are given many opportunities to continue to excel academically. Khan Academy is used in mathematics to push students to a higher level. Adjusted AR goals are implemented to ensure students are continuing to read at an advanced level. Enrichment and extracurricular activities such as Academic Team, Governors Cup, and Chess are provided. This year, a STREAM Team was created to allow the advanced students the opportunity to use their creativity in a less formal setting while exploring robotics, engineering, electronic circuits, and art. This club is student-driven so the students decide each week what they want to do. This has included designing and building a crossbow from popsicle sticks, assembling a remote-controlled car, and using mixed media to create the art of their choice. The goal is not to provide additional work, but to provide a differentiated and challenging learning environment.

3c. Special education:

If a teacher suspects a learning disability, a meeting with parents is immediately initiated to ensure the child receives testing. Working closely with the local public school, testing can be provided for parents who are unable to pay for private testing. An ALP (Alternative Learning Plan) is written for students who are diagnosed with a learning disability. Accommodations such as extended time for testing, limited answer

choices on assignments and tests, use of assistive technology, and scheduled time with the intervention teacher are implemented. ALPs are required to be read and executed by all teachers. A special education teacher who is trained in Orton Gillingham works with students diagnosed with dyslexia and dysgraphia two times a week. Saint Therese has a positive reputation for working with both students with special needs and their parents.

Saint Therese School prides itself on meeting the needs of all learners. The entire faculty and administration are 100% invested in meeting the individual academic needs of every child.

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:

Saint Therese School is a true family atmosphere from the faculty and staff to the families and students. Saint Therese has a variety of extracurricular activities such as service, academic teams, student council, book clubs, and sports that foster leadership skills and comradery amongst students and the teachers and staff.

Student Council consists of students in grades five through eight who lead the school in activities throughout the year. They work with faculty advisors to organize school events to create a positive school environment. They regularly organize fundraisers and collection drives for the parish food pantry and other social service organizations. Saint Therese’s parish food pantry relies heavily on the annual food drive to stock their shelves. Service to others is a cornerstone of the school.

Book Club is offered to students in grades four through eight. Several of the Book Clubs, hosted by the librarian and principal, take place in the evenings so a parent can participate. Many authors have met virtually with students to provide the opportunity to ask questions, read favorite quotes, and learn how an author comes up with story ideas. Students in grades kindergarten through third participate in a yearly Christmas Literacy Night. A beloved Christmas book is read and all activities center around the story. Eighth grade students take a vested interest in collaborating with the principal and librarian to help create the activities.

During the school day, students meet monthly with their school “families.” These families are a mix of all grade levels, and each group meets for activities throughout the year. Students also grow socially through the Buddy program. In this program, eighth grade students have a first grade buddy. The older students help make the younger students feel more comfortable, while the older students learn responsibility and social skills.

When COVID-19 closed the school, Saint Therese did not want to lose many of the traditions that students have come to love. Virtual activities became a must. A Christmas Literacy Week was created during which the principal read a story daily to the students via Google Meet and students dressed in a daily Christmas theme. Teachers also hosted their Christmas parties remotely. In science class, students worked on independent projects that included recording a video of an energy transformation contraption that they then shared via Google Meet. Several school-wide events such as May Crowning and eighth grade graduation also were performed and shared via social media.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Frequent, detailed communication regarding academic and school events contributes to school success. Teachers post grades to a school management system and email parents regularly. The principal shares information weekly with families through the Mustang Message newsletter. This newsletter gives insight into what is happening at school and shares pictures of students. The school also uses Facebook to share photos and recognize students.

Saint Therese’s greatest strength is family involvement. A core group of parents and volunteers work regularly shelving books in the library, preparing and serving lunches, and assisting students in classrooms. Mothers’ Club is strategically important for providing additional school resources. It spearheads the largest school-wide fundraiser, the annual Walk-A-Thon. School families and teachers collect donations and corporate sponsorships. Each year it generates approximately \$20,000. The money raised from this event goes directly toward the school technology fund. Annual Walk-A-Thon profits have purchased Chromebooks, teacher laptops, and an updated wireless infrastructure over the years.

The Saint Therese Athletic Club organizes extracurricular sports for boys and girls of all ages, which includes sponsoring an annual basketball tournament. The Athletic Club also provides money for P.E.

supplies and playground equipment. Both the Mother's Club and the Athletic Club provide scholarships each year to eighth graders attending Catholic high schools and support teachers with funds to defray classroom expenses.

Saint Therese has many ways for parents to be a part of the school community and interact with their children while at school. Some popular events include a Halloween Trunk or Treat and Morning Morsels with Mustangs. One of the most popular traditions at school is Parents to Lunch. Each week, one student from each homeroom gets to invite their parents to have lunch with them. Students look forward to introducing their parents to their friends, and parents love to see a glimpse into the daily lives of their children.

The faculty plan many enrichment activities throughout the school year. These activities include a Family Art Night, a STREAM Night, and a Literacy Night. These activities provide an opportunity for the school to showcase student work, and they give students and parents a chance to interact with each other.

Saint Therese has partnered with nearby educational institutions for several projects throughout the year. Students from Newport Central Catholic, the district high school, work with students in grades three and four on enrichment activities. The partnership with Thomas More University extends beyond students helping students. Faculty from Thomas More have worked with Saint Therese faculty for two years to align the school curriculum across grade levels. Saint Therese faculty also work with Thomas More students, allowing them to observe classroom instruction. This partnership has led to the hiring of several new teachers from Thomas More in recent years.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Saint Therese School faculty are fortunate to have many opportunities to develop new instructional techniques, analyze data to impact student achievement, establish technological proficiency, and become better equipped as educators. This became especially evident throughout 2020 as COVID-19 affected all aspects of teaching and learning. As things began shutting down in March, teachers worked together to implement a plan to keep students engaged. Teachers shared ideas and collaborated via video conferencing to find the best practices for engaging students. The principal was a co-teacher in all Google Classrooms so that she could still be active in the education of every student. She helped with instruction and gave support to first-year teachers who were overwhelmed; she also bolstered the morale of veteran teachers who suddenly and drastically needed to change tried and true methods of teaching.

During the summer of 2020, the faculty of St. Therese prepared for an uncertain future. Some teachers worked with parents on a COVID-19 task force to create guidelines for possible future school closures. All members of the faculty attended professional development training geared toward COVID-related problems, but they have since started using these strategies in daily instruction. One such training involved learning best practices while using Google apps and Screencastify. Another training centered around using MobyMax in the classroom; Moby Max is now a part of the curriculum at all grade levels.

All members of the faculty were trained in a summer workshop on using Kagan engagement strategies in the classroom. This two-day workshop left the teachers eager to use the structures in the classroom and wanting to learn more. Student engagement has dramatically increased through the use of these collaborative structures.

A Catholic identity is of great importance to the teachers. Each religion teacher must meet two levels of diocesan requirements to be certified to teach religion. After being certified, teachers must maintain an additional ten hours of professional development every year. The full faculty meet annually for a staff retreat; this retreat allows teachers to refocus on why they teach at a Catholic school.

The principal has an open-door policy, and teachers feel comfortable sharing both problems and successes. Through both formal and informal observations, teachers are evaluated and given feedback for improvement.

4. School Leadership:

Saint Therese School is managed by the pastor, the Board of Total Catholic Education, and the principal. The Board of Total Catholic Education, consisting of the pastor, school principal, and elected members, is the policy-making body for all educational programs in the parish. The Board works in conjunction with the Diocesan Department of Catholic Schools and follows all regulations set up for diocesan programs. The Board meets monthly to discuss issues relevant to the school and parish, such as standardized test scores, academic achievement, student enrollment, and classroom technology.

Beginning in the fall of 2019, the principal started in her role as administrator. She has been a faculty member at Saint Therese for over twenty years. The 2019-2020 school year was an unusual one to begin a new role, but the leadership of the principal helped staff and families make the best of a difficult situation. She spearheaded the implementation of an online curriculum, organized the pick-up/drop-off of homework, encouraged student fun through virtual theme days, and helped create videos to engage students and families. These videos included a Literacy Week, in which she read books to students, a May Crowning celebration, and a live virtual graduation ceremony.

To prepare for the return of in-person instruction in the fall of 2020, the principal led a COVID-19 task force, consisting of teachers, staff, and parents. A three-page plan for Non-Traditional Instruction days was created and implemented. In addition to all of the challenges brought by COVID-19, the principal also began a four-year-old preschool at Saint Therese in 2020. The preschool expanded to include three-year-old children in 2021.

Every decision that the principal makes is done with the best interest of the students in mind. She works hand in hand with the faculty, many of whom have taught at Saint Therese for over ten years. This continuity of the faculty is an asset to Saint Therese. Veteran teachers act as mentors for new teachers, using their years of experience to guide their first-year colleagues. The principal empowers teachers to take on roles in leadership. Teachers interact informally with the principal daily and meet as a faculty monthly to plan school events and share best practices.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a Catholic institution, the school and parish of Saint Therese strive to be welcoming to all despite racial, social, or faith differences. While specific Catholic doctrine is taught in religion classes, teachers also focus on universal themes of being kind to everyone.

Saint Therese only recently started charging tuition, and it is still at a low rate compared to other neighboring schools. This low tuition allows families to give their children a high-quality education in spite of economic hardships. There are tuition assistance programs for those who cannot afford the cost.

One of the three tenets of the Saint Therese mission statement is to make a positive difference in the world. Students are encouraged to make a positive difference on a small scale in their classrooms and families, and they are also encouraged to make the world a better place in the wider community. Throughout the school year, students work on service projects that include collecting canned goods or money for organizations. More important than raising funds, however, these service projects raise awareness. The students learn the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.

Another opportunity for students to learn about the world beyond their immediate community is through sharing current events in social studies class. Students find and discuss articles on topics throughout the world. This class is a safe place for students to ask questions and learn about things beyond their textbooks. Other classes also encourage students to learn about groups of people that might not be the focus of traditional lessons. In math class, for example, students do a research project to focus on women in math, and in technology class, students created a coding project for Hispanic Awareness Month. Resources such as Scholastic News, Readworks, and Discovery magazine all help to reinforce topics of interest in the world today.

This year, a part-time counselor was added to the staff. The primary role of the counselor is to ensure that students are both emotionally and mentally healthy. The counselor teaches a weekly lesson to each grade level on topics such as inclusion and friendship. The lessons are developmentally appropriate for each age group and a safe place for students to ask questions about anxiety and other health-related issues. She also works with small groups and individual students, as needed.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If there is anything that can be learned about teaching throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that embracing change is at the forefront of any success. The administration, faculty, and students at Saint Therese School have readily adapted to changes confronting them in recent years. Not only have they embraced change, but they have also thrived in the midst of challenges.

Saint Therese began the 2019-2020 school year with a new principal. While the principal was a veteran teacher in the school, that was her first year as an administrator. The excitement that she brought to the school community was infectious, and both students and staff were enthusiastic about the new school year. The COVID-19 pandemic altered the course of the school year and changes needed to be made. Teachers embraced new online media, and students adapted to a world of standing six feet apart. The Saint Therese community adapted to these changes and thrived.

In the fall of 2020, in addition to preparing for a return to in-person classes, Saint Therese School prepared for the addition of a preschool. The Board of Education and the Diocese of Covington had long encouraged Saint Therese to start a preschool program. The new principal created a preschool program from scratch and worked with the new preschool teacher to create a successful program that expanded to include three-year-olds in 2021. The school embraced this change and thrived.

In addition to new extracurricular and enrichment activities implemented with the new principal, the faculty began working with a local university to vertically align the curriculum from preschool to eighth grade. Even though teachers taught from standards, they often did not know what the grade below was teaching. Teachers met twice a month for a year to align the math curriculum. In the case of the middle school, they adopted an entirely new, more challenging, math curriculum. Students have embraced the change and are thriving.

As teachers began meeting in 2021 to align the reading curriculum, it became clear that one thing that needed to be improved was reading scores. Based on the practices of the third-grade teacher, who has had success with improving reading scores throughout the years, the principal and teachers instituted a school-wide reading initiative. All students receive a quarterly AR goal based on their MAP scores, and they have until the end of the quarter to reach this goal. The program has already produced an increase in MAP scores in students at all grade levels. The teachers and students have embraced these changes and are thriving.

While the new principal has been the catalyst for many changes at Saint Therese School, the willingness of the faculty and students to embrace these changes has been the key to success. Many schools fell academically during COVID-19, but Saint Therese has thrived because of its ability to adapt and grow.

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? \$5725
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1500
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 5%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%

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)