

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7171 Glenridge Drive, NE  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Atlanta State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30328-2630

County Fulton

Telephone (770) 394-2880 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://www.saintjude.net/> E-mail pchilds@saintjude.net

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.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Diane Starkovich E-mail dstarkovich@archatl.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Atlanta Tel. (404) 920-7701

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Anthony Flynn  
(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.

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

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**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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

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**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) 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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
0 Middle/Junior high schools  
0 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	50
1	55
2	55
3	55
4	54
5	58
6	67
7	46
8	46
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	486

\*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
  - 2 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 9.7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 80.3 % White
  - 6 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	499
(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):

Spanish, Portuguese, French, Vietnamese, Kiswahili, Haya, Swahili, Hindi,

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

0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 4

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 17 %  
Total number of students served 84

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>37</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>58</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>46</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>11</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %  
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 22

11. 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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. 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 25:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

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

Yes X No

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

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School nurtures the formation of Saints and Scholars. St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School develops Catholic faith, demonstrates Christian living, commits to student learning, and fosters good stewardship of God's world. Stakeholders pledge support to the continued improvement of St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.saintjude.net/Admissions/Apply-Now>

18. **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

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St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School, formed in 1962 as a ministry of St. Jude Parish, offers kindergarten through grade eight. As the school looks forward to celebrating its 60th anniversary, the mission remains: message, service, and community. The school strives to demonstrate Christian living, commits to student learning, and fosters good stewardship of God's world.

The mission statement, rewritten in 2008 and renewed annually, succinctly captures the spirit of the school. Even the youngest stakeholders easily recite the mission statement, declaring, "St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School nurtures the formation of Saints and Scholars." The school strives to educate the whole child, focusing on academic excellence, social-emotional growth, and cultural awareness.

The rigorous academic curriculum includes all core subjects, religion, fine arts, Spanish, and physical education. One important aspect of the curriculum requires students to "think on paper." Through the school-wide implementation of the Collins Writing Program, strategies are designed to develop students' essential writing and communication skills. Another curricular strength is the fluidity of the Resource Program. Based on the growing number of diverse learners, the school's Resource Program is crucial to meeting students' needs. Approximately 17% of the students have documented learning differences and are supported by academic accommodations. All students may seek help on a particular topic or specific skill whenever needed. Middle school students are encouraged to attend the after-school Jaguar Jam sessions for additional support with content area teachers.

Guidance lessons prioritize the emotional well-being of each student. Professional development and topics for student and parent education focus on mental well-being. Topics including emotional awareness, coping skills, anxiety, friendship/social skills, self-esteem, goal setting, decision-making, choices and consequences, responsibility, appreciating differences, and academic achievement are presented. Monthly "Coffee with the Counselor" has been a popular parent event. Refining executive function skills, St. Jude students create a Personal Learning Management (PLM) system which is practiced in school and at home. Emphasis is placed on specific habits each month to support study skills, organization, and time management. Middle school students reflect on their progress toward academic, health, and spiritual goals as they prepare and conduct their own parent conferences annually.

Through collaborative classroom experiences, students strengthen social interactions, communication skills, and cultural awareness. Highlighting different ethnicities each month provides an opportunity to celebrate diversity in the school. Of note, the week prior to Thanksgiving is set aside to promote kindness and bullying awareness activities.

A hallmark of the school is service to others. Students participate in school-wide and grade level projects annually. Examples of school-wide efforts include partnering with Rise Against Hunger to feed approximately 12,000 hungry children across the globe and providing the funds needed for Jamaica Mustard Seed residents to enjoy a summer field day experience. Examples of grade level service include the kindergarten toy drive, second grade's diapers drive, fifth grade's canned goods drive, and grade four students preparing meals for a local homeless shelter. Middle school students are required additional service hours. Through service to others, students discover the integral role they play in the world.

St. Jude School is located on eleven residential acres in Sandy Springs, a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia. The school draws students from four of the largest metro Atlanta counties. Enrollment has remained strong with 486 students registered and a waiting list at many grades. Most students are Catholic, though non-Catholic students are accepted and account for 11% of the student body. Support and love for the school continues through the generations. Currently, eighty students are children of alumni.

The school employs thirty-five teachers, seventeen paraprofessionals, media specialist, and school counselor. The average age of the teachers is 49; teaching experience averages 18 years; and 63% hold advanced degrees. The administrative staff includes principal, assistant principal, advancement director, enrollment manager, facilities director, business manager, technology director, six part-time administrative



assistants, two part-time custodians, and two part-time nurses. The lunch program, after school care, and nightly cleaning services are outsourced.

St. Jude School collaborates with parents in its mission to provide a quality Catholic education. Parental involvement is an essential component of the school's success. Volunteers serve in a variety of ways with approximately 90% of parents volunteering throughout the year. Parents are welcomed at lunch, weekly masses, morning prayer, student programs, and on fieldtrips.

Tuition assistance of \$311,770 was awarded to help 10% of families demonstrating financial need. The school actively seeks donations to support various scholarships to meet financial need.

The school holds district accreditation with Cognia through the Office of Catholic Schools. St. Jude School is honored to have been named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2003 and 2014. As a past recipient, the award continues to serve as positive marketing for the school. Parents have many choices for private education in Atlanta. Being recognized sets St. Jude School apart from other schools.

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

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The school follows the rigorous curriculum developed by the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The study of reading/language arts is varied and wide in scope. Specific needs of individual learners fluctuates significantly as they progress through each developmental stage. Essential elements of the curriculum are oral communication, written expression, reading, literature, phonics, spelling, handwriting, and vocabulary.

Instruction prioritizes the core areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Foundations begin in the primary level with content focused on phonics employing the Orton-Gillingham methods using a combination of direct instruction, guided instruction, and independent learning to meet instructional goals. Using centers, students experience independent and collaborative activities for specific skills/needs. Research and inquiry projects encourage students to use the media center and the internet to seek out information. Reading and language skills are applied to a variety of genres, balancing fiction and nonfiction selections. Each selection offers additional tasks related to social studies, geography, science, mathematics, the arts, and religion, making connections possible across content areas.

The middle school curriculum incorporates active reading strategies implementing classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction. Novels are selected to enhance other content areas and are selected based on reading level, interest, and current content. Students engage with text using extensive annotations and note-taking skills. Employing literature analysis, literary circles, and Socratic Methods, students develop deeper understanding and the opportunity to relate text to real life experiences and current events. Additionally, students focus on research papers, speech writing, orations, and respectful debating skills. Instruction remains targeted on preparing students for the demanding curriculum found in college preparatory high schools.

An important aspect of the curriculum is requiring students to "think on paper." Through the school-wide implementation of the Collins Writing Program, writing strategies are designed to help students understand and recall content. The program is organized around five types of writing which focus on assignments that develop students' essential writing and communication skills. Writing assignments increase the student's involvement in lessons, checks for understanding of concepts, and promotes critical thinking. Students keep individual writing folders throughout their years at St. Jude School. This allows students, teachers, and parents to monitor progress and growth.

Formative and summative assessments are used to diagnose, differentiate, and identify student needs which help to determine grouping and refine instruction. Formative evaluation data from STAR Reading, Fountas & Pinnell, SORTS and CTOPPs, along with teacher observations, provide a comprehensive picture of a student's progress. Summative assessments, including performance-based tasks, IOWA Assessment, writing folders, and unit tests, are routinely administered to gauge mastery of standards and guide instruction to areas of weaknesses and strengths.

Students in grades three to six participate in the Archdiocesan Battle of the Books competition annually. This program encourages reading, fluency, and comprehension skills. Students enjoy a variety of genres and compete in a quiz bowl style competition at the school and archdiocesan level. St. Jude School consistently has winning teams.

#### **1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The math curriculum inspires both teachers and students to break through traditional rote learning and application to explore math concepts in creative ways. Students in kindergarten through grade five learn probability, geometry, patterns, algebra, data collection, and analysis. Using themes such as mental skills and reflexes, estimation and number sense, problem solving and mathematical modeling, and algorithmic

and procedural thinking develop higher level thinking skills. Students are encouraged to think "outside the box" when solving problems and to journal to explain their processes in solving equations. Content is presented in whole groups and practiced in small groups. Learning is reinforced through individual practice and center work. Daily spiral reviews are incorporated which indicate if a student has understood a previously taught skill. This information assists in identifying students who need advanced level tasks and those needing additional support.

The sixth-grade math curriculum transitions students to a more traditional program in preparation for algebra and geometry. Students extend their knowledge of mathematics foundations through practice of a carefully planned scope and sequence of topics. Students are required to maintain a math journal as they continue to practice expressing their mathematical knowledge in written explanations. Pre-Algebra is taught in the seventh grade, and Advanced Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1 in eighth grade. Students are placed in the advanced course based on performance on the Riverside Algebra Aptitude Test, regular classroom assessments, IOWA Assessment, and teacher recommendations. The curriculum brings depth to algebraic concepts as groundwork for high school's college preparatory sequence in mathematics.

Technology is woven into daily presentations and practice at all grade levels. Teachers and students use interactive boards, iPads, Chromebooks, direct instruction, small group, collaborative groups, and demonstrations to teach the curriculum. Students record their problem-solving steps using the SeeSaw application. This video is shared with their teacher and parents so they can see how the student explained their reasoning in solving problems. Programs such as Moby Max, IXL, and Delta Math provide extension and practice for skills.

Math assessments include STAR Math, IOWA Assessments, math journals, a variety of formative and summative evaluations, adaptive digital programs, and teacher observations.

### **1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) which offers problem based, experiential learning that creates a wide range of differentiated learning opportunities.

Ongoing faculty review ensures scaffolded content, offering a wide variety of material introduced and reinforced from kindergarten to grade eight. Content covers each of the science disciplines for essential understanding. They are scientific process, technological process, earth science, life science/human body, and physical science. This correlates with lessons in the S.T.R.E.A.M. (Science. Technology. Religion. Engineering. Arts. Mathematics.) lab. Teachers employ digital resources such as IXL, Mystery Science, Scholastic Super Science, Gizmos STEM simulations, Generation Genius, Flocabulary, and more to deliver lessons that appeal to learners. Teachers utilize multi-grade interactions with topics and group collaboration to enhance the curriculum.

Writing across the curriculum requires students to maintain science journals and lab reports in which they have the opportunity to explain their thinking, planning, processes, and outcomes. Students work collaboratively and independently through scientific inquiry to prepare them for the dynamic world in which they live.

Dedication to inquiry-based learning resulted in a parent organized program designed to foster Catholic faith through eco-friendly gardening lessons. This hands-on, practical application creates and maintains gardens around the campus. Connections are made throughout the curriculum and learning extends through project-based opportunities across the curriculum. For example, students participated in an interdisciplinary unit centered around the social, economic, and political effects of having access to clean water. Each subject area used their standards to approach the topic. At its conclusion, students completed a two-mile walk carrying two one-gallon jugs of water and toured a local water treatment facility to raise awareness to the lack of clean water that many countries around the world face.

Assessments include lab reports, science journals, group projects and other inquiry based performance assessments, summative unit tests, and semester exams.

## **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Empowering students to be morally informed, intelligent, and involved citizens in a global community is the core of the curriculum. The standards are citizenship, current events, economics, geography, government, history, and world cultures. All aspects of the curriculum incorporate Catholic beliefs, service, and social justice.

Thematic units help primary and intermediate students explore citizenship through family, neighborhoods, and community helpers. Students learn about national holidays, the nation's history, the state, landmarks, map and globe skills, and geography. Learning about goods, services, producers, and consumers take learners into career exploration.

The school believes that it is critical to understand how history impacts today's society. Comparing and contrasting "then and now" and analyzing "why and how" pushes students to think critically. Middle school cross-curricular units engage students in real world experiences to better understand the role of the United States in American history, world history, and civics. Examples include the refugee unit where students simulated fleeing war-torn countries to experience what it would be like to cross borders, live in camps, and survive on rationed food. The Greek Festival involved students in mythology, arts, plays, Olympiad games, architecture, culture, and politics. Participation in the Daffodil Project with Am Yisrael Chai to build a worldwide living Holocaust Memorial by planting 500 daffodils annually, helps students gain awareness for children suffering in humanitarian crises around the world. Examining the United States from late 1880s to 2022, focusing on Reconstruction, the Progressive Era, the Civil Rights Movement, and contemporary times to understand the treatment of African Americans in the U.S., students assume the role of a journalist responding to questions citing details, laws, and events to justify their responses.

Field trips, guest speakers, and interactive opportunities extend learning. Assessments include unit tests and semester exams as well as various performance-based tasks including digital, written, and oral presentations.

### **1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

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

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

In art classes, students select, analyze, interpret artistic works, and develop artistic ideas. They learn how to relate artistic works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. Students are introduced to a variety of artists and become acquainted with an assortment of media including watercolors, tempera and acrylic paint, clay, colored pencils, oils and chalk pastels, fiber, and printmaking. All students receive instruction once a week.

Music gives all students the opportunity to analyze, create, and experience. Rhythmic and musical notation are written and practiced on international percussion instruments, ukuleles, and piano. Vocal techniques are rehearsed and performed. Students are exposed to works spanning history, genres, and cultures. Concert band offers instruction on woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments in grades five to eight. Fundamentals include the development of characteristic tone quality, basic music reading and interpretation, and proper playing posture. The band has performed at the NBA Atlanta Hawks games. Music and band classes meet twice weekly.

Middle school students participate in musical theater which provides another avenue to refine vocal and acting skills. Sung and spoken productions for clear expression of character are taught and practiced. Students meet twice a week and after school.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Physical education is taught to every child each week. Appropriate cognitive, motor, and affective aspects of human development are presented in a sequence that reflects the approximate developmental stages of students, accommodating individuals who have special needs. Teachers promote individual wellness, healthy habits, and team competition. Good sportsmanship is practiced as students learn to accept victory and defeat gracefully.

Along with the counselor, physical education and science teachers cover important topics. These include mental health and well being, positive self-concept, dental health, nutrition, drug awareness, personal safety, adequate hygiene, and physical health. Professional speakers have given presentations on mental health, anxiety reduction strategies, and organization skills. The physical education teachers host a before school track club for students and parents twice a week. Benefits include increased stamina, improved classroom behavior, and better cognitive focus.

In addition to physical education classes, students in grades three through eight have recess every day. Students in kindergarten through grade two, have two recesses daily. All students may participate in the after school sports program: Jaguar Sports. These include soccer, basketball, cheerleading, volleyball, and cross country.

## **2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

The Spanish curriculum introduces all students to pronunciation and intonation patterns, basic grammatical structures, and vocabulary of the language while developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Spanish cultural awareness, including music, art, and dance, develops and expands throughout all grade levels.

Primary students explore and use basic vocabulary in themes: colors, family, body parts, shapes, clothing, animals, and food. Topics include calendar, weather, and the seasons are covered. Primary students also learn the letters of the alphabet and numbers.

At the intermediate level, students are introduced to the basic concepts of greetings and personal introductions. They can answer common questions and follow simple written instructions. Letter and sound recognition of the vowels is taught and practiced. Introduction to basic grammar rules are presented.

Middle school students are encouraged to use more advanced vocabulary in their conversations with topics including sports, days of the weeks, months of the year, and time (minutes and hours). Advanced grammar rules are taught and practiced.

St. Jude School's Spanish program is taught as an enrichment class to all students from kindergarten to grade eight.

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

The technology/library curriculum aims to address the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare students for their future. All students have weekly technology and library classes. Skills are taught through integrated exercises and projects across the curriculum. Keyboarding, operations, word processing, coding, research skills, creative production, and responsible digital citizenship are critical components of the curriculum. The school is 1:1 with iPads in kindergarten and first grade and Chromebooks in grades two to eight. iPad carts are available for students to complete creative projects.

Project based learning is evident with applications such as SEESAW, Canva, Google Suites, and Movie

Maker, allowing students to create presentations to demonstrate their knowledge. IXL, Moby Max, and Delta Math provide practice and extension in all subject areas. Middle school students create their own learning portfolio website curating work samples throughout their middle school years. Research sites, such as Ebsco, World Book, and Facts for Me, give students the resources needed for research papers and curriculum projects.

Google Classroom is utilized as the delivery and communication portal for assignments, research links, assessments, student-teacher communication, and calendar/agenda keeping. Gmail is also utilized for student-teacher communication. Interactive boards and document cameras are installed in all classrooms.

## **2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share**

In the dedicated S.T.R.E.A.M. Lab, students focus on the engineering design process. Students collaborate and think critically when presented with a challenge. In kindergarten, students learn to code using Beebots. Grade one learns to operate Spheros during their Gratitude Parade. Grade two explores simple machines and how light reflects using Laser Maze kits. Grade three learns about force and motion by designing and building a boat with the Sphero as its motor. Designing and 3D printing of an animal with specific adaptations to survive in its environment is a highlight for students in grade four. Grade five builds a future city to address and solve the pollution, waste, and energy issues. Middle school students build pneumatic devices and rovers to gather samples on Mars, extract DNA from strawberries, and experiment mixing substances. The greenhouse provides first-hand experience on the lifecycle of a plant. The P.T.A. supports S.T.R.E.A.M. related field trips annually.

Middle school students enjoy two electives geared toward their interest each quarter. Choices include textured painting, cartoon drawing, pottery, golf, self-defense, robotics, stop motion animation, advanced coding, home economics, college and career counseling, event planning, finance, gardening, sport team statistics, ukulele, and drama (school musical).

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Students performing below grade level are identified through benchmark and progress monitoring data as well as IOWA Assessments. Small group instruction is structured to provide remediation and support to meet students' needs. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods incorporating art, music, technology, and hands-on activities to re-teach skills. Teachers meet with students who are performing below expectations individually to assess progress regularly.

Given additional support, students who are still not achieving meet with a resource teacher several times a week individually and in small groups. In these cases, the Student Success Team (SST) formulates a plan to keep students on track for continued progress.

All students have access to teachers during dedicated tutorial times and the middle school afternoon Jaguar Jam sessions three times a week. Struggling readers in the primary grades also participate in the K-9 reading program with dogs in a local service training program. Middle school students are leveled in math, science, and grammar to meet the needs of students who may require more support.

Teachers continuously review student progress using informal and formal assessments to diagnose, differentiate, and identify needs which then help to determine grouping and refine instructional plans to close achievement gaps. Recognizing varied learning styles and academic needs, teachers utilize innumerable instructional methods to provide remediation.

Students are monitored throughout the year using assessments such as Moby Max benchmark tests, STAR Reading and Math testing, MyView benchmark testing, and enVision cumulative assessments.

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

Teachers use informal and formal assessments along with benchmark data and IOWA Assessments to identify students performing above grade level. Resource and Enrichment teachers meet with the classroom teachers to identify the students in need of extension and enrichment beyond the grade level curriculum.

Classroom teachers challenge students performing above grade level using differentiated lessons in Moby Max, IXL, and Flocabulary. Novel studies are incorporated into the classroom instruction with choice boards for students to demonstrate extended skills. In grades four and five, students are placed in a competitive advanced math club which meets weekly after school.

Weekly academic enrichment is provided in reading and math for students in kindergarten to grade five with the enrichment teacher and assistant principal. Math enrichment activities include collaborative problem solving, critical thinking lessons, math games to promote fluency, and exposure to higher level content. Middle school students are leveled in math, science, and grammar to meet the needs of advanced learners.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Students with specific learning disabilities and exceptional social-emotional needs have increased over the past years. The school collaborates with parents as well as medical and other educational professionals to ensure that best practices are employed to support students. It is the school's desire that all students experience academic and social successes.

The Student Success Team (SST), comprised of resource and classroom teachers and led by the school counselor, meets with parents to review classroom performance, standardized test data, and medical and psycho-educational reports to formulate a plan to keep a student with disabilities on track for continued progress. Resource teachers meet regularly with the classroom teachers to ensure that accommodations are implemented in the classroom. Accommodations include additional time for completing assignments and tests, adjusted workload and deadlines, the ability to type written responses, testing in smaller and quieter environments, access to audiobooks, access to the teacher's notes, and tests read aloud to the student. The resource teachers provide pull-out and push-in support as needed.

The school counselor and the resource teachers are instrumental in monitoring accommodations, reporting to parents, supporting teachers, and collaborating with other professionals.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

### **3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

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

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

The school lives its mission of "nurturing the formation of Saints and Scholars" by focusing on the whole child. While proud of the rigorous curriculum and high expectations, St. Jude School encourages excellence not perfection. The school strives to meet students where they are and move them toward success.

Building relationships is apparent at the school. From greeting students as they arrive in the carpool and having lunch bunches with small groups to having personal conversations about weekend activities, successes, or difficulties, teachers strive to make personal connections. Teachers and staff are frequently present at soccer and basketball games, musical and play performances, school festivals and events, and Sunday Masses.

Middle school students are randomly assigned to small groups with one faculty member forming a T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) for the year. T.E.A.M. groups meet several times a month to promote positive self-esteem, foster a sense of community and belonging, create a safe place to voice opinion, and establish and monitor individual goals.

Student leadership opportunities include Student Council, Bully Awareness Council, News Crew, and Safety Patrol. Created in 2021 is the Student Ambassador program, open to grades one to eight. The program helps students develop leadership skills, speak in a professional manner, make positive first impressions, and serve as a role model and friend. Students are trained to be tour guides and serve as buddies to new students.

Engaging students through service is a hallmark of a St. Jude education. A wide variety of service opportunities allow students to serve their community as the hands and feet of Jesus. There are individual, grade level and school wide projects and service requirements.

Behavior Bucks and Scholar Dollars are earned by demonstrating kindness, generosity, and selfless acts. Bucks and Dollars are entered in periodic drawings for small tokens of recognition. Academic recognition includes Honor Roll, Principal's List, Spirit of Saint Jude, several service awards, and a variety of eighth grade graduation awards.

Student surveys are conducted to gauge student thoughts about homework, uniforms, extra-curricular offerings, and lunch menus.

The growing need for social-emotional support has been a driving factor in the engaging guidance program. One such effort focuses on bully awareness. The school dedicates the week prior to Thanksgiving as a Bully Awareness Week. The week focuses on the impact of bullying and reinforces the school's policy on how incidents, should they occur, are managed. The week involves the entire school community. Parents receive daily emails with the latest research on bullying and teachers across all grades and content areas incorporate this information into daily lessons and activities. The week includes themed days such as "putting bullying to rest" with a pajama day.

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

To promote student success and school improvement, the school cultivates a partnership between home, school, and community founded in strong and frequent communication. The school purposely engages families in volunteer opportunities to foster connections. Parent surveys indicate satisfaction with the school. The presence of parents and grandparents at school events sends a message of support.

The school's main source for family communication is SchoolSpeak which hosts the website, emails, and weekly newsletters. Teachers utilize this site and Google Classroom for posting homework, assignments, and class news. Individual classroom newsletters, weekly student performance records, and information folders provide regular communication between the school and families. Communication with families



include phone calls, emails, conferences, "card in the pocket" system, "Oops" slips, tech violations, demerits, and merits. Teachers post syllabi and newsletters sharing important information, curriculum topics, and other pertinent news. Conferences are held twice a year, and as needed, to ensure student success.

The school's public website and social media pages serve for recruitment and communication. The website provides general information about the school, admissions, curriculum, and donation opportunities. Social media and livestream broadcasts encourage extended family and alumni to engage with the school. It welcomes a wider audience to school masses and events. It also provides an avenue to share accomplishments and highlight events.

The Parent Teacher Alliance (PTA) is engaged and supportive. They contribute to the success of activities that benefit the school with financial support and volunteer hours. The Principal's Advisory Council (PAC) and Finance Council are comprised of stakeholders from the parish, community, and current parents, ensuring insight and guidance thus providing a positive balance for school viability and initiatives.

The school shares with various community audiences including St. Jude Parish, Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools, and the Sandy Springs neighborhoods in which the school resides. In honor of the school's 60th anniversary, the Sandy Springs mayor declared October 28, 2022, as St. Jude School Day in Sandy Springs.

The school collaborates with colleagues within the archdiocesan schools. Meetings for principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, media specialists, technology directors, admissions and advancement offices, counselors and resource teachers, and religious education directors are held throughout the school year. Topics include learning differences, executive function skills, curriculum, and mental health.

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

With a strong belief that continued growth as a teacher will magnify student potential, the administration promotes a variety of professional development opportunities. These opportunities include attending local and national conferences, participation in online courses, learning from professional speakers brought in-house, and acquiring financial assistance to pursue advanced degrees.

The principal supports teachers and provides them with the materials, training, and encouragement to be the best they can be. PLC teams meet to learn, practice, and share a variety of topics that interest and support teachers as they refine their craft. During the pandemic, most of professional development was directed by technology-assisted remote learning including Google Classroom, Google Suite, Zoom, and other digital instructional and production applications. Focus has been placed on executive function skills and social-emotional well-being as we move out of the pandemic.

Vertical team meetings between grade levels take place to analyze standardized test results. Teachers delve deep into the IOWA Assessment results to focus instruction on weaker areas. For example, grade one students showed weakness in listening skills. The enrichment teacher was tasked to deliver weekly listening activities with all first-grade students which resulted in improved performance.

To ensure implementation and alignment of content areas, teachers submit curriculum projections and weekly lesson plans to the administration for review. Opportunities are given for horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum which encourages collegial conversations and sharing. Mid-year reviews of curriculum maps are conducted by the assistant principal to ensure teachers are on track and adequate adjustments are made.

All play an important role in maintaining a culture true to the school's mission and of professionalism. Shared decision-making is modeled whenever possible to establish school procedures. Teachers are supported and provided with the materials and training needed to best serve their students.

Teachers identify professional, personal, and spiritual goals at the beginning of the school year. The

principal and assistant principal meet with each teacher to discuss goals, professional development, needs, and any concerns in the fall. They meet again in the spring to assess progress toward goals and evaluation of the school year and performance.

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

As a servant leader, the principal believes her responsibility is to provide a positive learning environment, steeped in the Catholic faith and tradition, to help others to be the best versions of themselves. Deliberate steps to ensure that Catholic identity is strong is evident to all stakeholders. Helping students develop a deep love and respect for God, themselves, others, and the world is foundational to the leadership's philosophy. Students are encouraged to grow into responsible and caring adults who are productive members of society. Developing the minds of young learners as they grow to become critical thinkers, analytical problem-solvers, and future leaders is paramount to the school's leadership.

Important that stakeholders feel valued and supported with opportunities to voice concerns and opinions, the principal has an "open door" policy welcoming students, staff, and parents. To further facilitate communication, the Principal's Advisory Council (PAC), Finance Council, Parent Teacher Alliance (PTA), Administration Team, and Grade Level Coordinators meet regularly. These groups offer input to the principal for the development and implementation of local school policies, strengthen community bonds, support students and staff, endorse events, evaluate programs, review curriculum, and ensure the continued viability of the school. The principal communicates regularly with families through newsletters and emails. The principal is a visible presence from morning carpool to the last student leaving the building each day. The principal can be found at all school events, at parish gatherings, and Sunday mass.

A practice adopted by the school leadership are faculty book studies. A book is selected for summer reading which then creates a year-long theme for discussion and activities. The 2022 summer selection was *What Great Teachers Do Differently* by Todd Whitaker. The principal wrote a personal note to each of the grade level coordinators highlighting a theme from the book which that level coordinator exemplified. Each level coordinator took their book, writing a note to a teacher on their level. Books progressed through the various levels with teachers making note of the wonderful characteristics seen in each other. At the end of the school year, the books will be returned to the principal for a celebration of gifts and talents during post-planning.

St. Jude School is designated as a parish school within the Archdiocese of Atlanta and operates under the direction of the pastor of St. Jude Parish and the Superintendent of Schools. The school holds district-wide accreditation through Cognia. The school is a member of the National Catholic Education Association, ASCD, and the Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools.

#### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

St. Jude School's mission is to "nurture the formation of Saints and Scholars." The school partners with parents and the Church to create a culture centered on reverence of human dignity. The development of good character, manners, social skills, compassion, and empathy aids students in their growth as disciples of Christ and productive members of society. The school sets equally high expectations for appropriate behavior and rigorous academic standards.

Religion, guidance, and social studies curriculums lend themselves to the opportunities for teachers and students to recognize, acknowledge, and explore cultural differences. Service projects offer invaluable learning opportunities for students as they participate in experiences that allow them to learn about challenges faced in the world beyond their school doors.

The school is fortunate to have a growing culturally diverse population. In response, the school celebrates nationally recognized heritage months. Embracing cultures by sharing unique foods, clothing, traditions, and family photos, the school has created a warm connection between the school and growing populations. For example, students participated in a gallery walk during National Hispanic Heritage Month taking the opportunity to view student-created art displays highlighting Hispanic countries. A school-wide Italian and

Filipino family tree was created in the school's front lobby where families were encouraged to add photos. Lumpia, a traditional Filipino dish, was enjoyed by students and they learned the art of Tinikling folk dancing. During Black History Month, students researched African American inventors. They wrote a short research paper, recorded it through the SeeSaw application, and generated QR codes that were displayed throughout the building. All students were invited to take a self-guided QR/audio tour, using iPads and headphones, to learn more about these famous inventors.

Current events and changing social norms are addressed through the teachings of the Catholic Church. Age-appropriate discussions on specifically sensitive issues are most often handled by the school counselor, religious education coordinator, and the principal. Social media issues and digital citizenship are ongoing instructional topics addressed by the school counselor, technology teacher, and the school administration. The school also utilizes non-biased publications, such as Scholastic Magazine and CNN for Kids, to inform students on national and world events.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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The success of St. Jude School is simple; it lies in its strong 60-year legacy of shared mission and steadfast community bonds. Catholic faith, strong values, common goals, and traditions draw families to the school. As children are encompassed by a caring community, they are empowered to take risks in their learning and achieve greater personal accomplishments. They are connected across grades, families, neighborhoods, and the parish. Together, these components offer a “net” to help buoy each student and every family. The diversity of professions, experiences, backgrounds, and interests of parents, faculty, staff, alumni, benefactors, and community partners engaged in the students’ education creates an ideal environment for a broader insight and understanding of the curriculum taught and life skills acquired by the students in the process.

Evident of the educational and community impact of the school is the number of alumni’s children enrolled. Currently, eighty students’ parents graduated from the school and eleven are the third generation of St. Jude Jaguars. Generation to generation has been nurtured as a Saint and a Scholar believing in the school’s mission and contributing to its future.

Further engagement is evident in the number of graduates who have returned to the school over the years as teachers. They return to the school to share with the next generation what they gained as students. Traditions are held sacred while creating new memories to further the impact of the school. Also speaking to the confidence in the school is the number of faculty and staff who entrust their own children to the school. Currently, there are fifteen students whose parents work at St. Jude School.

Events, programs, and masses for students, families, parents, or alumni offer opportunities to connect and celebrate. Often, comments are shared on how meaningful an event was, how well students performed, or how welcomed they felt. Notes, emails, surveys, and conferences affirm satisfaction for the academic rigor, needed academic help, or emotional support provided. The gratitude expressed for prayers, support and kindness when there are needs, and for the community created are innumerable.

Financial support of the school is humbling. The annual fund has exceeded its goal for more than ten years with wide community support. The school is honored to have achieved 100% parent participation in the annual fund for the past seven years. Donors are generous in their gifts to various scholarships and the endowment fund. From renovation projects to special events, former parents, grandparents, and parishioners overwhelmingly support the school’s efforts.

St. Jude School is the network that binds stakeholders together; each supporting and encouraging the efforts of others. A home away from home, St. Jude School is a family. It is that sense of community that is St. Jude School and the most important strategy in its academic success.

## PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

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

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No
3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$11113  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$5760
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      8%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      35%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*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 (2021-2022)<sup>1</sup>. 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 subgroup<sup>2</sup> 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 assessments<sup>3</sup>).

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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)