

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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. Raeann Huhn

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

Official School Name Saint Francis High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2130 W Roosevelt Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Wheaton State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60187-6085

County DuPage

Telephone (630) 668-5800

Fax (630) 668-5893

Web site/URL <https://www.sfhscollegeprep.org>

E-mail rhuhn@sfhscollegeprep.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Phil Kerr

E-

mail pkerr@sfhscollegeprep.org

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

District Name Diocese of Joliet

Tel. (815) 221-6100

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. Debra Falduto Novack

(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 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

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	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	177
10	176
11	165
12 or higher	159
Total Students	677

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4.2 % Asian
 - 1.2 % Black or African American
 - 11.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79.3 % White
 - 3.8 % 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: 2%

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

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

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	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	672
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

N/A

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 28

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 0 %
Total number of students served 1

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>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>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 17 %
Total number of students served: 114

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 18

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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	44
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.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 16:1

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	98%	99%	99%	99%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	180
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	6%
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 ☐ No ☒

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

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

St. Francis High School develops students to be faith-filled participants of the Church, to be committed to Christian service, and to be critical thinkers that effectively and creatively communicate.

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

<https://www.sfhscollegeprep.org/about-sfhs/employment>

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

St. Francis High School (SFHS) provides students with a well-rounded education to prepare them for a successful future. The school community is best characterized as a place where students build meaningful relationships, are academically ambitious, and cultivate a lifelong love for giving back.

Faculty and staff know more than just students' names: they know their stories. The school's focus on relational connections encourages a culture where "everyone knows everyone" and milestones are celebrated while challenges are faced as one. This relational aspect expands outside of the school walls as families deeply engage in student life activities and build relationships with each other. With a wide geographic reach of 65 zip codes, the SFHS community becomes its own neighborhood of households. The SFHS family remains bonded after graduation as connections with alumni are maintained: the oft-quoted mantra is "Once a Spartan, forever a Spartan." In the 2021-22 school year, approximately \$1.9 million in contributions were made; this extraordinary level of investment is a testament to the appreciation of the entire school community.

SFHS students are driven, ambitious, and eager to learn. Students at SFHS have diverse interests and are often committed to an abundance of activities: for instance, a student may be a two-sport athlete, choir participant, and student government leader. This is not an anomaly: this is a typical student. SFHS students strive for academic excellence through their commitments and their dedication to the curricular rigor. They are eager to demonstrate their ambitions beyond the classroom. Data supporting this includes a 100% college attendance rate, 97% student participation in co-curricular opportunities, 27 average ACT score (with the top 25% earning an average score of 31), and 30 clubs offered. Additionally, in the past five years, SFHS has had five students earn a perfect ACT score, one perfect ACT Superscore, and one perfect SAT score.

"In giving, we receive" is a line from the Prayer of Saint Francis, and students internalize its meaning and are willing to share their time and talents to causes of substantial impact. Students are grounded in strong values and have a desire to make a difference. Through the opportunities offered by the school, students truly see the face of the underserved and learn to understand their stories. Examples include tutoring, hosting block parties in impoverished neighborhoods of Chicago, and distributing school supplies to local children in need. All students must complete 15 hours of this level of service each year.

Key Strategies: SFHS provides students with a rigorous curriculum that is fast paced but does not sacrifice depth or breadth. Teachers provide one-on-one attention and individualized instruction to students. By meeting students where they are, SFHS provides quality education to every student regardless of their previous competencies. Visits from the Counseling Department and the School Nurse provide crucial strategies for coping with stress, emotionally challenging situations, and socially trying times. Because faculty and staff are in frequent correspondence with the counselors and nurse, everyone is knowledgeable of student situations and how to best serve them.

Techniques and programs: Leadership programs like the Student Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT), Student Ministry Team (SMT), and Student Government afford opportunities to build relationships and for continual student growth.

Through SALT, students make connections with prospective students and share their experiences as SFHS students. They engage in rigorous training focused on presentation, leadership, and communication skills. SALT members act as shadow hosts for prospective student visits and participate in admissions and advancement activities such as phonathons and video testimonials. More than 120 students serve on SALT with more than 200 applications received annually. Students are eager to act as liaisons and share their positive experiences. Most notably, the school's Open Houses are primarily led by SALT members.

The students selected for SMT meet regularly on Friday at 6:30 a.m. to grow in their faith and plan for the faith development of the community. These leaders organize prayer and service opportunities in alliance with the mission of the school to bring "peace and all good," another mantra of the school, to those around

us. Students are also encouraged to join Men's and Women's Spirituality groups. These weekly gatherings and monthly dinners provide an opportunity for the formation of faith and character, bringing practical application of the religion curriculum and providing students opportunities to grow with one another.

SFHS's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has culminated through a group of teachers who discuss pertinent contemporary issues such as race, inequality, and more. During the 2021-22 school year, SFHS offered professional development on Social-Emotional Learning from Dr. Thomas Fuller, who discussed how to reach students in a more cohesive and equitable manner. This demonstrates the school's willingness to continue to grow and better serve all students of all backgrounds.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Four years of English Language Arts (ELA) is required for SFHS graduates. The English Department offers two levels of courses, college preparatory and Honors, which is Advanced Placement (AP) at the junior and senior levels. Freshmen enroll in Literary Genres and Composition, which covers advanced grammar concepts, vocabulary, analytical skills, and writing skills, along with a focus on reading texts of various genres from around the world. Sophomores enroll in American Literature and Composition, which expands on freshman skills and material with a renewed focus on textual complexity and American literature ranging from the Colonial Era to the present. Juniors are offered Language and Composition, which focuses on argumentative writing, rhetoric, analysis, and nonfiction texts. This includes an emphasis on research, citation, and synthesis. Seniors enroll in British Literature and Composition, which focuses on literature from the Anglo-Saxon era to the present. Emphasis is on college-level writing: expository, argumentative, analytical, and creative styles. Four electives are also offered for students who desire more: Yearbook, which develops written, design, and layout skills; Newspaper, which develops journalistic, written, design, and interviewing skills; Creative Writing, which focuses primarily on poetry, short stories, and drama; and Speech, which focuses on presentational communication.

The learning standards, particularly composition, reading, analysis, and grammatical, are addressed in a variety of ways. The curriculum map ensures horizontal and vertical alignment so foundational skills are formed in grade 9, expanded in grade 10, refined in grade 11, and mastered in grade 12. The department utilizes assessment data to determine when flexibility must be pursued; adjustments are made and shifts in teaching styles are adopted when students' competency needs improvement. By explicitly stating lesson plan objectives to students, they know exactly what is expected and what needs to be gained. By formulating "I can" statements, such as "I can determine the meter and rhyme of a sonnet," teachers can assess in conjunction with students the level of success attained. Teachers implement student-driven lessons with a smattering of traditional and non-traditional assessments. The summer reading program differentiates SFHS further by indicating the value of ongoing learning and literacy beyond the school year. The program includes a variety of assessment methods, including projects, written responses, and traditional tests, and the readings are diverse, challenging, and engaging.

Consistent with the overall school philosophy, English teachers' instructional methods are diverse; however, the department is unified through discussion-based lessons, the Socratic method, and at times lectures are the best course of action. For writing, peer revisions, experiencing a variety of texts and styles, and teaching "writing as a process" is crucial. For grammar, application in their written expression rather than memorization is the focus.

ACT scores demonstrate the academic prowess of SFHS students. The 2020-21 mean ACT ELA scores were well above the national average: the reading average was 24.9, and of particular note, the writing score average was 7.2. Graduates stand out in their freshman year of college because of their impeccable writing skills and are highly prepared for any writing-intensive course.

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

The Mathematics Department is committed to teaching mathematics for its intrinsic value while following the STEM model in its approach. Students learn to ask questions, define a problem, obtain and evaluate information, interpret data with appropriate tools, and design a solution. Through ACT Readiness Standards, the department is dedicated to developing students' ability to think analytically and creatively, thus improving problem-solving skills. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to practice logical thinking, organization, communication, and technology skills. With a commitment to providing a challenging and rewarding program, students are empowered to realize their mathematical potential and appreciate the value of mathematics.

Three years of mathematics are required for graduation, including algebra and geometry. A college preparatory sequence of courses includes Algebra I, Geometry, and Advanced Algebra. A student following an Honors sequence would begin as a freshman in geometry, at either the college preparatory or Honors level and culminate in a full year of college preparatory Calculus, AP Calculus AB, or AP Calculus BC. Teachers strive to meet the diverse needs of students through concepts-level courses in both algebra and geometry. These courses help students who arrive with a deficiency in their mathematics background to become fully prepared for the advanced algebra curriculum as juniors. To ensure all students enroll in the fourth year of mathematics, additional electives are offered, such as Statistics, Precalculus, Trigonometry, and Finite Math, in addition to three AP courses. When entering SFHS, mathematics placement is based on many factors including proficiency test results, teacher recommendations, junior high grades, and rigor of the past curriculum. Students are never “tracked” in one sequence in mathematics. Because teachers communicate and collaborate often, student sequencing placements are fluid and re-evaluated each year based on strengths and successes.

Mathematics teachers collaboratively create guided notes for each course and distribute these to students through Microsoft OneNote notebooks. Pedagogically, these electronic binders are utilized for notetaking, practice problems, feedback, and additional resources such as videos and reviews. Students regularly complete homework and present problems to their class using their OneNote notebook. All teachers of like courses collaborate to follow identical lessons, to provide the same notes/examples, and assess students using the same instruments, all guided by the respective standards. Instructionally, diverse methods are employed, ranging from the traditional lecture with examples to student-led discovery and cooperative group work. The department creates Skills Readiness Workbooks for students to complete over the summer. These workbooks serve as a method of collecting formative data as the school year begins. Teachers use these results to tailor specific areas of cumulative review to include in assessments throughout the semester. These assessment questions and example problems are always tied to standards and expectations as established per the curriculum map.

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

The Science Department develops students’ skills with natural laws through investigation and experiment in a hands-on learning environment. Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) guide the curriculum and course sequencing and therefore integrates STEM practices and methods through a focused approach. Students apply conceptual knowledge, reasoning, critical thinking, and creative expression to the process of problem-solving. A minimum of three credits are required for graduation and include Biology (college preparatory or Honors), Chemistry (college preparatory or Honors), and Physics (college preparatory or AP Physics I). The department offers a breadth and depth of electives that include Anatomy and Physiology, Environmental Science, Forensic Science, Introduction to Engineering and Design, and AP Biology, AP Chemistry, and AP Physics C.

Performance statistics on standardized tests bear out the efficacy of this methodology. SAT and ACT scores exceed the national average. Mean AP test scores are sufficient to earn college credit, and many students go on to select STEM majors in college. In an extension of the department’s hands-on, inquiry-based learning approach, students submit two formal lab reports per semester, which is further preparation for lab work at the collegiate level.

As a part of the department’s Cognia accreditation work, they continually collect performance data, which allows teachers to collaborate and modify individual approaches while adhering to the NGSS standards. Many science courses as a result moved away from traditional semester assessments to final projects. The outcome is a well-rounded comprehensive experience in the sciences that nurtures different learning styles, promotes problem-solving and logic, and inspires students to critically observe and appreciate the world around them.

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

Social Studies includes a two-year graduation requirement—nearly 100% take three years or more—specifically World History or Honors World History, U.S. History I (Pre-Columbian through Civil War), and either U.S. History II (Post-Civil War through World War II) or III (Post-World War II to Present), which are also offered as AP U.S. History. The department utilizes the Illinois Learning Standards, American Psychological Association national standards, and American Sociological Association national standards to guide instruction and curricular development.

The department highlights the need to teach course content as well as inspire students to compare past events and current situations to explore human behavior. Responsible decision-making is analyzed through understanding major themes, events, and schools of thought within the social sciences. Students can enroll in electives after their sophomore year, including Sociology, Geography, Economics or Honors, Psychology or AP level Psychology, AP U.S. Government and Politics, and Criminology. Curriculum maps are employed to maintain the appropriate standards.

Instructionally, individual teaching per course is emphasized over centralization. Some courses naturally require more project- and exploration-based methods, while some may need more lecturing and investigative reading. By offering a diverse array of educational approaches, all students are reached. Technology plays a huge role; by utilizing different software for project production and knowledge demonstration, the department prepares students for the 21st century.

Formative data is typically collected via class discussion, checks for understanding, and traditional assignments. This data is collected to determine the level of understanding prior to the provision of an assessment. Project-based assessments—such as experiments in AP Psychology, presentations in World History, and research writing in U.S. History—offer students the chance to express understanding beyond selecting the “right” answer on a bubble sheet. By exploring knowledge rather than merely absorbing it, students are grounded in authentic social science investigation.

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

SFHS supports college and career readiness in myriad ways. To begin, SFHS uses the Naviance software, which includes career and college exploration, surveys regarding student learning styles, and comparative statistics regarding college choices and preferences. Students know exactly where they are going and how to get there due to the ongoing support system of faculty and staff. They find support in the exploration of where their interests, aptitudes, and strengths intersect. This approach allows students to set appropriate goals and determine objectives to attain them.

Clubs, activities, and Student Government, along with Pastoral Ministry, Christian service, SALT, and SMT, provide a diverse array of options to explore leadership opportunities and community and civic responsibilities. Students discover who they are and what their skill sets are by engaging in the wide range of activities and roles offered. For instance, students can provide tutoring and donations to a local community of low-income families and senior citizens in need, share their faith through Eucharistic service, or become part of the National Honor Society (NHS) or Student Government to partner with their peers and advance their educational experience.

Academically speaking, SFHS offers true college preparatory courses, which are rigorous, challenging, and parallel to college expectations. Additionally, the school offers a Marketing Management class that includes a semester-long project in which students develop and market a product of their own design. This project prepares students’ entrepreneurial sensibilities because of its authenticity and real-world problem-solving, as students develop and market their product through research, presentation, and advertising. Additionally, the school’s NHS chapter created and implemented a leadership opportunity for current eighth graders called “Rise Up.” NHS students lead this annual workshop for incoming students and cover topics such as leadership, teamwork, character building, and service.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

The Performing and Visual Arts Department (PVA) focuses on instilling a lifelong appreciation for art in all forms. Although PVA is not a graduation requirement, 48% of students are enrolled. Through auditions, concerts, programs, and art shows, students have the unique opportunity to truly express themselves. Opportunities abound for all students, whether they are first-timers or consummate experts. PVA teachers often use project-based learning that revolves around state and national standards. Students perform both locally and nationwide, with audiences ranging from seniors at local nursing homes to the crowds at Disney World and Cedar Point Amusement Park. The Rock Band is one-of-a-kind and renowned in the area, the choir has placed first in the state for three consecutive years, and theater productions are of professional quality. The recent addition of the Production Technology course gives students hands-on exploration of the design and production of scenery, lighting, sound, costumes, props, and makeup. Student artwork is displayed at an annual SFHS Art Showcase, which is judged by renowned local artists. On a national level, students' artwork has been selected in the Congressional Art Competition for exhibition at the U.S. Capitol.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Physical Education and Health Department promotes the development of students and mission of the school simultaneously. Students build increased levels of confidence and competence in health-related and skill-related fitness components. The knowledge acquired leads to behaviors that aid students in leading healthy lifestyles while in school and beyond. The goal is to intrinsically motivate students to pursue healthy lifestyles without coercion; in other words, the department hopes graduates will be self-disciplined, independent, and empowered to make healthy decisions. SFHS differentiates itself by offering a high level of rigor not often seen in physical education departments through traditional assessments, content proficiency, peer and self-assessment through video analysis, and longitudinal data collection of personal fitness progress. Graduation requirements give students the opportunity to enroll in physical education one semester each year. Sophomore students enroll in the semester Health course where they learn about relationships, healthy eating, how the body works, mental and emotional health, and substance use and abuse. CPR certification is also offered. Rising seniors may participate in a summer course focusing on rock climbing, mountain biking, and kayaking.

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

The World Language Department promotes the school's vision of developing students who are effective communicators and responsible citizens of the world by offering courses in Chinese, French, and Spanish. All courses are aligned to the national World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Students are required to complete two years of the same language for graduation, but most continue beyond. They can enroll in college preparatory, Honors, and AP courses with a total of 17 offerings. In pursuit of fostering functional fluency in another language, the courses focus on proficiency in the three modes of communication: interpersonal, presentation, and interpretive. All courses use student reflection documents for self-tracked progress and electronic portfolios to demonstrate student growth in each of these areas. As part of the department's current continuous improvement plan, each course includes at least one novella to incorporate comprehensible input strategies, focusing on the interpretive mode. Student progress for this mode is tracked by student progress checklists and quantitatively from summative assessments. Students also have an opportunity to travel abroad for an immersive cultural experience to France, Spain, and/or China, which is organized and chaperoned by World Language teachers. SFHS offers seniors the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy on their academic transcripts, which promotes mastery in two or more languages.

2d. Technology/library/media

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is an open, flexible space that offers a wide variety of materials, both print and online, covering a wide range of academic topics as well as providing fiction materials from

classic literature to the latest releases. The LRC offers opportunities for students to hone research skills and evaluate sources and is guided by the ELA CCSS (Common Core). The Library Media Specialist is available in-person for students, teachers, and staff before, after, and during school, and through email at any time. Access to all online resources is available 24 hours a day from school or home in the LRC Resource Tile in the student portal. Online resources include Gale, Infobase, JSTOR, and Proquest. The LRC has many types of spaces to use for independent study, group study, classroom work, and reading, and it includes a media room with green screen, photography lightbox, and two 3-D printers. A flexible workspace with flexible furniture allows students to work collaboratively. Virtually all departments as well as co-curricular clubs utilize this domain in creative and unique ways.

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

The Business and Technology Department is a distinguished department with 40% of students enrolled in one of its 11 electives. There is a large breadth of offerings, which include Accounting I, Honors Accounting II, Consumer Education, Business Law, Business Communications, and Marketing Management. Approximately 40% of graduates major or minor in Business and many pursue business careers, demonstrating the impact of the department. Technology offerings include Introduction to Programming Language, AP Computer Science A, Microsoft Office, Maintaining Windows Technology, and Digital Literacy (graduation requirement).

The department creates an environment in which students develop abilities to analyze, evaluate, problem solve, and respect others' opinions, which follows the National Business Educator Association (NBEA) Standards. Additionally, students compete in the SIFMA Foundation's Stock Market Game, which enhances student engagement and improves financial behavior. SFHS teams have won this competition for seven consecutive years.

Also unique is how the Pastoral Ministry and Religion Departments work in tandem to build and maintain a distinctive Catholic culture. This partnership allows students to practically understand the charism of Saint Francis of Assisi through prayer and contemplation, service for peace and justice, and lifelong formation. The Religion Department thoroughly adheres to the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) standards.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

SFHS students do not perform below grade level per se, therefore, the focus is instead on students who are not performing up to their career and college-readiness benchmarks. SFHS meets students where they are in their academic trajectory; these students are granted many opportunities to elevate their academic performance.

The Spartan Study program is productivity-focused and helps students gather the executive functioning skills they may be lacking and offers guidance from a full-time learning behavior specialist on an individualized basis. This supported resource class helps students rise to the expected level by teaching time management, study habits, self-advocacy, stress management, and accountability. By working with students on their transition to high school, teaching them how to manage their schedule, and modeling effective communication with teachers and peers, student success is cultivated.

The Mathematics Department offers concepts-based classes that focus on the essential and foundational skills and concepts. These courses offer the opportunity to reteach as necessary by adjusting the pacing to ensure competency. They do not sacrifice content but instead, offer individualized support. SFHS also offers NHS peer tutoring and has extensive contacts with local external tutors and retired SFHS teachers who also assist students.

In short, SFHS believes in all students and does not give up on them. In fact, teachers offer office hours before and after school to ensure students demonstrate the competency they are capable of with proper

assistance. SFHS schedules an Activity Period every day from school dismissal, which is 2:30, until 3:10 p.m. This provides students with time to participate in co-curricular activities or seek additional help from teachers. This unique period affords students the opportunity to utilize the available supports, and it emphasizes the priority of education, as sports practices begin at 3:15 p.m.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

SFHS is committed to academic rigor and student support. Students performing above grade level are challenged, engaged, and prepared to advance to the next level. Because SFHS prides itself on challenging every student where they are, advanced students are no exception. For these reasons, SFHS offers 123 courses, 18 Honors courses, and 18 AP courses, which allows countless academic combinations. Some Honors and AP courses include Honors World Religions, Honors Economics, AP Music Theory, AP Studio Art Drawing, AP Studio Art 3-D Design, AP Spanish and AP Chinese Language & Culture, and both AP Language & Composition and AP Literature & Composition.

Course sequences are organized by college preparatory, competitive college preparatory, and highly competitive college preparatory designations. Students select their courses according to their aspirations and level of readiness. A college preparatory sequence, for example, is geared toward universities such as Marquette, Purdue, and Loyola, while a highly competitive preparatory sequence targets universities such as Northwestern, Notre Dame, and Stanford. This gives students who are performing above expectations ample opportunity to continue growing. Students are not, however, tracked, meaning that students start at different places within each academic discipline.

The school ensures all students are confident, comfortable, and perpetually advancing by connecting students to enrichment opportunities outside of the traditional classwork. Example programs include the National Student Leadership Conference, Northwestern Medicine Discovery, National Youth Leadership Forum, the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership conference, or some advanced English students seek opportunities to compete with other writers and school newspapers. For students who complete advanced coursework early in their high school career, SFHS offers connections to local summer college programs and online schools for further advancement. Furthermore, these students can serve as tutors through NHS to continually challenge their understanding.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At SFHS, more than 100 students have diagnosed disabilities and are eligible for special education support services. These students receive accommodations for a wide range of diagnoses that include ADD/ADHD, social-emotional, specific learning disabilities, executive functioning, and autism spectrum. The SFHS Special Needs Coordinator develops a detailed individualized accommodations plan for each student. The coordinator meets with each family to explain the plan and its implementation. Teachers carefully read each plan to ensure the best possible education is provided to every student. For example, preferential seating may be provided to students with focus or hearing needs, or extended time granted on written assessments for those with reading comprehension or ocular impairments. SFHS has a designated testing room that allows students to finish assessments during their study hall.

In addition, the coordinator may hold staffing with teachers to ensure students' needs are met. These conversations examine the level of success of the student at hand and evaluate what strategies may or may not be working. In order to provide effective case management, close communication with the teachers, family, and students is always maintained.

To support students' social-emotional health, SFHS's Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor provides an extensive group therapy program, monthly awareness programs, and confidential screenings. The group therapy program includes a freshman success group and a transfer group that supports students' transition to SFHS. Additional groups support students with ongoing mental health concerns and low self-esteem.

In partnership with SFHS's co-curricular club, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), the Counseling Department offers two robust awareness weeks: Red Ribbon Week and Mental Health

Awareness Week. These weeks are highly participative with lunchtime and afterschool activities.

In summation, SFHS strives to do everything possible to ensure our students, no matter their needs or circumstances, can and will succeed.

3d. English Language Learners:

N/A

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

SFHS offers what is deemed the “SFHS Difference.” The difference is SFHS, first and foremost, is a Catholic college preparatory school. Everything is done with the goal of preparing young men and women to be leaders in college and beyond. Each young adult is challenged to continuously grow academically, emotionally, and spiritually. Everyone’s talent is cultivated. Whether it is in the classroom, on the stage or field, or in service to others, students are provided opportunities to explore and grow in their own unique direction. At SFHS, students become the very best versions of themselves and are fully equipped for lifelong success.

SFHS thoroughly prepares students for college, not just for graduation. Students are not merely sent through but developed to succeed beyond high school. The SFHS counseling staff ensures comprehensive, ongoing, and professional assistance. Counselors work 1:1 with students to ensure the journey is rewarding. The Counseling Department has a four-year college and career development plan. Freshmen focus on Interest Inventory & Career Discovery in the required Digital Literacy course using Naviance. Sophomores connect profile attributes and interests with potential future college decisions through Portfolio & Resume Building. Counselors help students add to their individualized portfolios for future applications. Junior year targets Interest Engagement & College Discovery. Students work closely with their counselor to narrow potential college choices and ensure course selections meet the specific and sometimes unique demands of their future college. Finally, College Selection and Scholarship Application prepares seniors for the application process and selection after building solid portfolios and resumes customized to the schools they have identified. The Class of 2022 (180 graduates) total college merit scholarships was \$25 million plus.

The faculty serve as examples of lifelong learners as 67% earned a master’s degree and 6% earned a doctoral degree. Expert faculty members connect with each student. They keep students on track from freshman through senior year as advocates, supporters, and mentors. In addition, 75% of faculty and staff are also coaches and moderators, which continues engagement with students on a personal level outside of the classroom. By demonstrating such dedication to students, students recognize their own value.

SFHS’s greatest strength is the community. While the curricular and co-curricular programs are impressive, SFHS is home. Relationships are at the heart of everything. Graduates remember SFHS as the place where they made lifelong friends. In fact, the current staff includes 10 alumni.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The SFHS mission asks parents and the broader school community to give more of themselves as good citizens of the world. This outreach aims to be transformative for those served and involves an encounter with another in order to accompany and stand in solidarity with those in need (lacking resources such as food, clothes, shelter, or healthcare). Through outreach and charitable works of mercy, students engage in activities such as tutoring the underserved, accompanying the sick, and collecting gifts for those in need year-round. To form students in solidarity with others, SFHS partners with retreat centers, charitable organizations, and local communities to foster student growth as citizens.

To further students' empathy and develop practices of Christian service, SFHS has developed a successful relationship with Faith and Fellowship and Our Lady of Angels Mission both located in Chicago. These non-profit organizations primarily work with underserved communities. SFHS students make and serve meals, join in recreational activities, distribute food, and participate in worship. SFHS also hosts on-campus back-to-school fairs sponsored by Catholic Charities for DuPage County. Many SFHS community members volunteer at these fairs by distributing materials and babysitting children so their parents can fully participate. For approximately 25 years, SFHS has sponsored Catholic Charities clients during Christmas with gifts tailored to each family's needs.

Students serve as ambassadors: the SALT program engages students with local grade schools, churches, and

other community ventures to expand the school's reach. SALT students visit other grade schools, host shadow students, work at Open Houses, and help ensure prospective students' comfort level during the Entrance Exam. They also reach out to prospective families and strengthen the school's relationship with new community members. Many students also tutor at local elementary schools; conduct afterschool reading programs; volunteer at the school auction; serve as student directors of plays, coaches, and math team leaders at grade schools; and serve in religious education. The PVA Department is also busy performing at local parades, private clubs, community events, and local restaurants.

As a private school, parent and community partnership is a critical component of the school's strategic plan. A robust annual communications calendar has been developed by the Director of Strategic Communications that includes media outreach, email marketing, regular updates, emergency notification management, daily social media updates on multiple channels, and community partnerships. This ensures all audiences are up to date with the latest information and enables students and parents to be fully engaged throughout their high school career.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

SFHS is a powerhouse of support. The professional culture is best defined as one of growth, community, and student advancement. Each year, a theme is established to connect faculty and staff to a common topic: past themes include Connection, Rootedness, and Reflection. These themes are a grand unifier, come what may.

Continuous school improvement as it relates to student learning and engagement is a primary focus of the school's Cognia accreditation. At SFHS, this ongoing work is led by a teacher and empowers academic departments to collaborate and focus on new learning opportunities and optimal learning environments as it best suits their needs.

First, staff is equipped to support students' academic and social-emotional needs. A suicide prevention workshop from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention was offered, detailing the social-emotional dimension of students. The workshop focused on strategies to recognize and react to behaviors associated with suicide and social-emotional needs such as loss of connection and hope. Further seminars will provide practical tools to empower teachers and staff with respect to trauma-informed instruction. By addressing these sensitive issues head-on, faculty and staff can act appropriately and help students with these additional needs.

Second, SFHS ensures students benefit from evidence-based interventions to create individualized and impactful learning experiences. Each academic department creates an objective based on needs that demonstrate reflective practice, project-based learning, and/or student-centered learning. Critical initiatives were developed with activities to support them and key measures. For instance, Physical Education is modifying its curriculum to support annual common fitness, which accounts for tracking individual fitness goals. The Science Department is working toward project-centered learning and assessments; for example, new labs and mediums such as videos. In short, it is about demonstrating what students can do rather than what they know.

Third, SFHS is impacting classrooms and learning with professional development. Annually, new external professional development opportunities are shared, whether seminars, courses, or community-building exercises. These opportunities are encouraged by administration. Classroom coverage is provided to participants to ensure they can attend. There is also a tuition reimbursement program to encourage advanced education.

New faculty members attend onboarding sessions throughout the year, wherein support and training are offered. This helps teachers and staff feel understood and eases them into the community. SFHS has an official welcoming committee that aims to acclimate staff as well. Frequent faculty/staff meetings keep an open line of communication and transparency, thus demonstrating respect for employees.

4. School Leadership:

The President/Principal model at SFHS carves out distinct responsibilities for each role and shared responsibilities. The President and Principal share responsibility for the mission, vision, and school philosophy. They act as spiritual leaders, serve in long-range planning, and institute the school's climate, Catholic identity, religious formation, ministry, and collaboration with the Diocese of Joliet and other associated agencies.

The President oversees advancement, serves as the executive officer, and is the official spokesperson of the school. The President's focus includes fundraising, financial reporting, and liaison to the Board of Directors. Areas of responsibility include alumni and community relations, marketing, financial aid, budget development, and operations and facilities.

The Principal serves as the school's operating officer, educational and instructional leader, and is responsible for the daily operations. The Principal is the primary contact of faculty and staff, families, and students; he/she develops curriculum and faculty and academic programs; and oversees student life, counseling, and health and wellness; co-curriculars (athletics, activities, clubs, and performing arts); and major academic and co-curricular events. The Principal's recent implementation of divisional groups, which comprise multiple academic departments, has led to better strategizing, curricular development through collaboration, and benefits for students. The Principal's role in observations and professional evaluations, using Danielson's Four Domains of Teaching Responsibility, demonstrates dedication to improving pedagogy and student learning.

Most recently, a 10-year strategic plan, Preserving the Legacy, Building for the Future, was developed and emphasizes four key pillars that lay the foundation for the school's work. The first pillar, "Enhancing Our Curricular and Co-curricular Experiences," allows the school to further develop the caring culture of excellence in college readiness, spiritual formation, and nurturing the well-being of students. Pillar two, "Investing In Our Physical Spaces," has the school developing a comprehensive campus master plan to thoughtfully plan for the future and make sure facility investments are done wisely. The next pillar, "Continuing Our Financial Strength," focuses on the need to continue to grow the school's endowment and increase scholarship opportunities. The final pillar, "Expand Our Community," is to cultivate the distinctive relationships faculty and staff share with former, current, and future students. As SFHS celebrates its 65th anniversary, this is an exciting time to plan for another 65 years.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a school, SFHS recognizes students have unique needs and backgrounds. Consequently, SFHS individualizes learning, connects with students on a social and emotional level, and recognizes the individual journeys of students. Through updates from the Counseling Department, frequent correspondence with families, and maintaining strong relationships, students are seen and known. SFHS faculty actively research ways to address needs through professional development and seminars. SFHS is cognizant of religious differences and embraces all students while maintaining a Christ-centered philosophy. The school enrolls non-Catholic students, though all students are required to fulfill the Religion graduation requirement.

SFHS celebrates ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and religious diversity. By embracing students for who they are and their differences, the school can better offer what students need and provide the best educational experience. Faculty and staff continue to consider relevant issues and ways to support a diverse student body, and many have pursued research to help mitigate some of these needs. Faculty and staff also share resources to better understand these issues and areas for improvement. The school has also taken great strides in engaging students of diverse backgrounds for admission. Equity, inclusion, and diversity are inextricably linked with the Catholic vision and mission of the school, and as a result openness and acceptance are promoted throughout the building at all levels.

In response to ongoing conversations regarding race in America today, the school ran a commemoration of the Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights era by drawing students' attention to their individual contributions and raising awareness. SFHS has a growing Hispanic population which was celebrated during Hispanic Heritage Month. A bulletin board in the main atrium featured Hispanic historical figures and stories, and daily announcements that called attention to stories that often receive less attention than they

ought to. Two students received the National Hispanic Recognition Award from the College Board and were celebrated in school communications. Overall, an open line of communication with families, students, faculty, and staff promotes a healthy and open culture at SFHS.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

A practice instrumental to SFHS's success is its 1:1 technology environment and certification as a Microsoft Showcase School. Selected by Microsoft, Showcase Schools are an elite group that exemplifies the best of teaching and learning in the world. This outstanding accomplishment is attributed to the efforts of the entire school community. SFHS is one of 42 schools in the U.S. to earn this designation and has held this distinction since the 2017-2018 school year.

Eighty-nine percent of faculty are certified as Microsoft Innovative Educators, and eight are also Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts. The preparation to earn these certifications equips teachers to recognize 21st-century challenges and the need for authentic assessments and teaching methodologies to support different learning styles. Additionally, 20 staff completed a 21st Century Learning Design course. Microsoft tools and resources ensure teachers are up to date with the latest trends.

The risk of using technology is having too many disparate tools. As a 1:1 school, all students – and teachers – have access to a Microsoft Surface Pro device. When teachers and students utilize the same technologies, communication and integration are streamlined. The Surface Pro ensures documents are maintained and provides all the tools students need in their learning journey. The available Microsoft technologies support many learning styles.

The Microsoft OneNote notebook (an electronic binder) is a game-changer. Curriculum is distributed, assignments submitted, feedback provided, and grading completed through OneNote. OneNote, in conjunction with Teams functions, promotes collaboration and teamwork, and students graduate prepared for an authentic, college-level education.

The school's utility of technology allows for unique and creative responses to problems: for instance, auditions and performance assessments in PVA can occur remotely if needed. Teaching has also become more diverse with the array of tools available: the sciences, for example, can utilize a flipped classroom model to ensure student learning happens in the class as well as at home.

SFHS was one of the only local private schools to have a comprehensive plan for remote learning during the pandemic. The school quickly and smoothly transitioned. Consequently, other schools contacted SFHS for strategies and tips on how to implement a similar program and students were less prone to the learning loss that affected so many students during the subsequent school years. SFHS also offers Microsoft Open Houses for other schools exploring this model.

In short, the Microsoft Showcase status evolved instruction, assessment, and the whole of education at SFHS. It altered the landscape entirely for the betterment of the entire school community.

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? \$16383
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3404
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? 25%

PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2021-2022)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)