

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

Official School Name Saints Philip and James School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 721 E Lincoln Highway  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Exton State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19341-2802

County Chester

Telephone (610) 363-6530 Fax (610) 363-6495

Web site/URL https://school.sspj.net/ E-mail steresa@sspj.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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Andrew McLaughlin E-mail amclaughlin@archphila.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Philadelphia Tel. (215) 587-3585

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 Mr. Patrick Folan  
(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**

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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	37
K	20
1	17
2	15
3	13
4	19
5	17
6	10
7	12
8	12
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	172

\*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
  - 8 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 80 % White
  - 7 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 6%

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	7
(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)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	173
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 15

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %  
Total number of students served 24

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>12</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 1 %  
Total number of students served: 2

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 6

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 14:1

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%	98%	99%	99%
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. 1989

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

Saints Philip and James Catholic School provides a Christ-centered, academically excellent education that empowers students to reach their full potential intellectually, physically, socially, and morally. Collaboration and a spirit of community are the hallmarks of our school where Christian values are at the core of all we do.

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

<https://irp.cdn-website.com/006bfa20/files/uploaded/Handbook%202022-2023%20R.%20.pdf>

See Page 8 for nondiscrimination policy.

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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Saints Philip and James School (SSPJ) located in Exton, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia, was established in 1960 by the Pastor and parishioners to provide full-time Catholic education for the children of the parish and surrounding area. The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) provided leadership and classroom teachers along with lay faculty. Saints Philip and James School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools- Commission on Elementary Education (MSA-CESS) and is a member of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Faith, Worship, Academic Excellence, and Service are the pillars of Saints Philip and James School community. The charism of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) undergirds and supports the academic program and spiritual formation of the students.

Saints Philip and James Parish School community includes primarily intact families from middle to upper middle class socio-economic background. Many of the parents attended Catholic school and have made the commitment to invest in a Catholic school education for their children. In addition, a small percentage of the students have experienced separation or divorce within their family structure. Some students come from a lower income household. In the past three years, the Pre-school program has welcomed an increase of Indian families who have moved into new housing developments in the immediate area. The mission of the school is centered on Christ which promotes a strong community spirit among all the families and respects the growing religious and cultural diversity in the school.

One of the key strategies used within the school that has encouraged and challenged all students to develop their full potential is the well-developed curriculum provided by the Office of Catholic Education (OCE) for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP). The standards for students to meet in each grade support achievement and academic excellence. The Honors Math program challenges students in grades four to eight who are ready for more advanced math studies. In addition, students in kindergarten to grade five participate in “First in Math” to develop fluency in math computation and higher order thinking skills. This year fifty percent of the eighth-grade class qualified to take the prestigious Neumann Scholarship test. Saints Philip and James School has had ten Neumann Scholars within the last nine years, giving evidence of its high academic standards.

Another strategy is to ensure that students who are struggling in reading and math are given the necessary help to be successful. The Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) provides a math specialist and a reading specialist two days per week to support students who need additional help in math, reading, and language arts. The speech specialist provides vocabulary and language support. The school hired a Resource Teacher to provide math, reading, and language arts support for the remaining three days.

A third strategy has included the purchase and implementation of technology to provide one-to-one devices for all students in grades Pre-K 3 to eighth. This has enabled the integration of technology across all subjects. During the past two school years with Covid, teachers were able to provide both in-person and virtual instruction due to the investment in technology. Teachers in kindergarten to eighth grade utilize diagnostic software (IXL) to better differentiate instruction. Using the results of the Terra Nova standardized testing, teachers can challenge or remediate as needed.

The implementation of the STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art, Math) program encourages students to work collaboratively, to develop creativity, to incorporate higher order thinking skills, and to strengthen executive functioning skills. Teachers work collaboratively with the Specials Teachers to plan projects that integrate topics across the curriculum and with technology. The STREAM Lab provides a dedicated classroom for students to design, test, analyze, and build projects in small groups utilizing a variety of materials and computer programs.

The School Guidance Counselor plans and executes a yearlong program to support the emotional health and well-being of the students. Last year, the program centered on “Mindfulness,” which enabled students to positively deal with anxiety that was more prevalent due to Covid. This year, teachers and students are focusing on Executive Function skills. Students are more cognizant of organizing their materials and



initiating and completing tasks and projects. The support from the Guidance Counselor has been especially helpful having experienced two years with Covid and the gradual return to “normal” school activities.

Saints Philip and James School received the Blue Ribbon in 1989-1990. In addition, the Office of Catholic Education has recognized SSPJ as a School of “Distinguished Instruction” in 2019, 2021, and 2022 based on the Terra Nova test scores. This recognition has promoted high achievement among the students and challenges teachers to maintain high standards of instruction within their classrooms. The Preschool program has been voted the Best Preschool in Chester County by the readers of the Daily Local for three consecutive years. These awards have attracted new families to enroll their children.

## **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 content for the Reading/Language arts curriculum comes from the Office of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, which reflects the Core Standards of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. English language arts instruction includes reading, writing, vocabulary, phonics, spelling, grammar, handwriting, and library/reference skills. Reading and English language arts are taught each day in kindergarten through eighth grade.

In grades K – 5, teachers utilize an approved integrated basal program. Reading selections include the development of vocabulary, phonics, spelling, grammar, and writing. Supplementary materials are used for handwriting instruction and grammar practice.

Teachers incorporate whole class instruction while developing the lessons. Leveled readers allow for small group practice and differentiation of levels of reading in the class. Interactive lessons using the ViewSonic board encourage full class and small group engagement. Pencil and paper practice in workbooks and notebooks promotes correct handwriting and allows the teacher to assess students informally. The use of iPads and Chromebooks encourages students to practice skills learned and provides feedback for teachers to assess students' progress. Partner reading helps students practice oral reading while developing fluency and appropriate expression.

Instruction in writing covers the developmental steps of brainstorming, outlining, prewriting, writing, revising, and editing/proofreading. Teachers maintain an English language arts (ELA) portfolio for each student with samples of student writing and summative test results from the Benchmark tests that accompany the basal program.

Middle School ELA follows a standards-aligned curriculum in keeping with the framework outlined by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Students learn and practice literature, writing, and language standards through the study of multiple genre units found in each grade-level textbook. Selections in the text are differentiated by level and supplementary resources provide scaffolding as well as enrichment for diverse learners. Whole class novels offer opportunities for longer reading selections. Reading drives writing instruction. Mentor texts are used to model the Six Traits of Writing. Students practice all steps of the writing process as they learn how to craft argument, informative, and narrative pieces of writing. Vocabulary and grammar workbooks are used to practice foundational skills vital to reading and writing.

Teachers at the Middle School level use a gradual release method of instruction, utilizing a variety of instructional techniques designed to build independence in the student. Teachers use direct instruction, whole class teaching, partner work, and collaborative groups. Standards spiral throughout the year and students have multiple opportunities to engage with the material. As a facilitator, the teacher guides learners through more student-directed assignments like Socratic Seminars. As students work through the writing process, one to one conferencing with the teacher delivers targeted, individualized instruction. Teachers differentiate through choice, interest, and ability. Students are provided scaffolded assignments where necessary. 1:1 Chromebooks are used every day to practice skills. The ViewSonic board is used daily to display information or show video clips to enhance instruction. Students can collaborate via the ViewSonic board and use it interactively.

Multiple assessments are employed to best reflect the progress of each student. Formative assessments take place frequently through the use of quick writes, exit tickets, and monitoring. Summative assessments include quizzes, tests, unit tests, and formal projects. Daily IXL practice also provides clear data about each student's individual progress and opportunities for growth.

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

The Diocesan Elementary Mathematics Curriculum is a carefully planned program, consistent with Pennsylvania standards and Core Standards of the Catholic Identity Curriculum Initiative, as well as the recommendations of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics. Emphasis is given to the Core Mathematical practices of problem solving, mathematical reasoning, precision, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, modeling, using appropriate tools strategically and looking for and making use of structure. The Elementary Mathematics Curriculum is divided into ten levels of instruction beginning with kindergarten and extending to an Algebra I Curriculum. With the exception of honors math students, students are heterogeneously grouped for mathematics instruction. The math program builds from basic number sense through algebra. Drill and maintenance sheets are used to maintain knowledge. Students are engaged in instruction through teacher-directed lessons, modeling, cooperative learning, word problems, calculator investigations, and hands-on activities. Math is taught daily in kindergarten through eighth grade.

The K-5 standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals—which help young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures and move into applications. The standards stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels.

Having built a strong foundation, K-5 students can do hands-on learning in geometry, algebra and probability and statistics. Students who have completed seventh grade and mastered the content and skills through the seventh grade will be well-prepared for algebra in grade eight. The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.

At the end of third grade, the teacher identifies students who achieved above grade level for placement into advanced math for fourth grade. Students who meet the criteria set by OCE may enter the Honors Math Program after fourth grade. Guidelines for the program state that a student must have a CSI (cognitive skills index) of 125 or above, Terra Nova Scores in the 90th percentile in math and above the 80th percentile in reading, and an average of 90 in math. Eighth grade students take the online Scantron Performance Series Algebra test three times a year. These students can enter high school having completed Algebra I.

Students who are taking Algebra are following high school standards. The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The high school standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

A variety of summative assessments are integrated into the math program to help document achievement and guide instruction. The implementation of IXL into instruction supports daily instruction, curriculum, and assessment and aids in the development of differentiated instruction. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are continuously developed. Technology is integrated using ViewSonic boards, graphing calculators, and websites. All students are invited to participate in enrichment activities such as “First In Math” and Catholic Math League Competition. SSPJ has received commendations and awards from these competitions.

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

The science curriculum follows the Archdiocesan Guidelines and addresses the Next Generation Science Standards. Science is taught from preschool through grade eight. Preschool utilizes the Frog Street Program which is an interdisciplinary approach for instruction. Science is integrated throughout the week within the literacy component.

In kindergarten through second grade, science is taught weekly. The content includes hands-on activities, interactive notebooks, writing exercises, and experiments which support the curriculum and build inquiry skills. Informal assessment is done through teacher observation and completion of activities that develop the concepts being introduced.

Grades three through five use the Nancy Larson Science Program, which is taught four to five days per week. This program provides a rigorous curriculum with hands-on learning to create a challenging and engaging learning environment. It incorporates the Core Standards for Language Arts and addresses the Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers provide students with techniques for remembering important information such as taking notes, highlighting important facts, and using graphic organizers. Students at the elementary level are introduced to predicting, inferring, forming models, and interpreting data. Teachers assess students' progress through the use of Nancy Larson tests, understanding and completion of experiments and labs, and individual and group projects.

Middle school science in grades six to eight is taught daily. Students learn to think critically and analyze results promoting higher order thinking skills. The Middle School curriculum includes the Next Generation Science Standards and covers Life Science, Earth Science, and Physical Science in a three-year cycle. The continuum of thinking skills is incorporated into the Science Curriculum by building upon previously taught concepts, implementing the scientific method, and providing appropriate activities and lab experiments. Students participate in the school and county Science Fairs. Technology is integrated throughout the science curriculum. All science teachers provide lab activities on a regular basis in the fully equipped science lab to enhance classroom instruction. Assessment at the middle school level incorporates quizzes and standardized tests, Quizlet online, group activities and reports, lab experiments with data sheets, and informal observation.

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

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia Social Studies Curriculum was based upon the C4 Standards of Civics, College and Career Readiness, and Catholic Identity, as well as the ten themes of Social Studies established by the National Council for the Social Studies. The major topics that are included are: Kindergarten – Self and Others; Grade 1 – My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago; Grade 2 – My Community and Other Communities; Grade 3 – Communities Around the World; Grade 4 – State and Local History and Government; Grade 5 – The Western Hemisphere; Grade 6 – Eastern Hemisphere; Grade 7 – United States History – Exploration to Civil War; Grade 8 – United States History – Civil War to 1960.

Social Studies in kindergarten through second grade is taught weekly but is not graded. In grade three, social studies is taught 130-150 minutes per week and is graded. In grades four through eight, social studies is taught daily and is graded. Students at every level are asked to commit to memory important patriotic topics, documents, and songs.

Teachers in kindergarten through second grade utilize a variety of sources to develop the content. Scholastic News, online worksheets, video clips, library books, and software provide a multimodal instructional strategy. Literacy skills are developed through critical thinking and problem solving. Students learn the importance of being an involved citizen and understanding the interdependency of a global community. Assessment at these levels is done informally through observation, class participation, and completion of projects.

In grades three through eight, students use a textbook with the online components. Clips from Discovery Education enhance the instruction. Social studies is an interdisciplinary exploration of the social sciences and humanities, including civics, history, economics, and geography. The goal is to develop responsible, informed, and engaged citizens in the 21st century and to foster civic, global, historical, geographic, and economic literacy. Students learn to understand current events, the role of government, and the importance of participating in elections.

Teachers assess students' competence in social studies with the textbook standardized testing, through projects and research papers, through oral presentations, PowerPoints, current events presentations, and completion of classwork and homework assignments.

In all grade levels, connections to faith, values, and the role of the Church in history and the culture of the community is integrated. Respect for all cultures is essential to be taught. Students learn to discuss issues

that involve differences of opinion, to negotiate and compromise in the resolution of differences, and to identify situations that require social action and to suggest solutions.

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

Saints Philip and James School educates students in grades seven and eight. The Archdiocesan curriculum guidelines include kindergarten to eighth grade. Middle school, which includes grades six through eight, has been included in each of the above curriculum areas.

Many of the students who graduate from Saints Philip and James School enroll at Bishop Shanahan High School. Others register at Villa Maria Academy High School, Malvern Prep, Devon Prep, St. Joseph's Prep, STEM Academy High School, or the public school in their area of residence. Feedback from the high schools provides a positive picture of the graduates. They are frequently elected to positions of leadership, involved in extracurricular activities, achieving success in sports, and providing service to the community. Most students continue to higher education at community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, or trade school.

Saints Philip and James offers opportunities for Middle School students to explore potential careers by exposing them to real world problems. SSPJ hosted an "hour of code" event where industry professionals spoke about potential careers in software engineering and students participated in coding challenges. Saints Philip and James also exposes students to financial literacy using the SIFMA stock market game. Students compete in a year-round competition using research and collaboration to buy and sell stocks in real time.

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

The Pre-K three-year-old and four-year-old programs follow the guidelines for Early Childhood Education from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Pre-Kindergarten Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood. Teachers assist in the development of the whole child spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Both Pre-K programs utilize the Frog Street Program which explores language arts, mathematics, music, science, social studies, and guided center play.

The Early Childhood guidelines target children's development in key learning areas such as cognitive, social-emotional, language, and fine and gross motor skills. These factors are important in helping younger children develop school readiness and success in the primary grades. Teachers encourage care givers to read to their children and become active in their children's learning by helping with social, literacy, and fine motor skills.

Students experience the joy of being created and loved by God. Children participate in Mass and are included in prayer services throughout the school year. Preschool children enjoy outdoor playtime on a daily basis. They explore the creative arts through art and music class, and participate in physical education class and Spanish class once per week.

In combination with using an Early Childhood designed curriculum, teachers conduct on-going assessments of children. Assessments are completed three times a year according to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia skills.

Teachers use concrete materials and hands-on experiences to enable learning through self-discovery. The curriculum is integrated with technology and each child receives an individual iPad for instruction. They learn basic digital literacy and work with instructional technology, such as Reading Eggs and Happy Numbers, to supplement their education. These developmental experiences prepare the early childhood learners for the transition to formal academic programs in the primary grades.

Students who require additional support can be referred to the Early Intervention Program of the Chester County Intermediate Unit for evaluation. Results of the evaluation determine what extra help is needed, such as speech, Physical Therapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT), or therapeutic support service (TSS), which

can be provided on site, or by attending afternoon classes at the Early Intervention Center located in West Chester, PA.

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

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

The Fine Arts curriculum follows the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP) guidelines and incorporates core principles set by the National Association for Music Education. All students in grades Pre-K 3 through eight receive an education in art and music on a weekly basis. The visual arts introduce students to various artists, styles, and techniques throughout art history. As students progress through each grade level, they are encouraged to apply their understanding of basic principles and incorporate their own creativity and individuality to develop unique styles. Students are guided through each phase of the creative process, including how to problem solve while creating artwork, and to practice taking risks. To promote the students' natural curiosity and exploration of the arts, various drawing and sculpting resources are provided following the completion of each art project for independent study.

Similarly, students learn the fundamentals of theory, history, performance, and composition in their music classes. Through studying composers, instruments, and musical styles, the students develop an appreciation and knowledge of music, which is then applied to their musical writing and instrumental performance on the piano and classroom percussion instruments. The music program also provides students an opportunity to participate in the choir and band, sing at school liturgies, take piano lessons, and perform in school recitals and concerts.

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

The Physical Education teacher provides weekly instruction to students in Pre-K 3 through eighth grade. The Physical Education teacher follows the AOP guidelines. Developmentally appropriate activities are structured and created to build physical fitness and character formation. Each class period is an opportunity for students to continue to build and practice new skills for themselves and with their peers. Students learn to cooperate with others through teamwork and collaboration skills. Students continue to practice and use proper and appropriate communication skills among their peers. They learn and are expected to show respect for themselves, authority, and for others. All techniques, skills, and directions are appropriately employed to teach good sportsmanship and healthy competition.

Students are held to the utmost accountability to maintain a structured class period. Each class period, students receive a better understanding and or a continued practice of how their bodies work and move. Each class is an opportunity for students to receive and broaden a better understanding of themselves physically, mentally, socially, spiritually, and emotionally. Students are very much encouraged to incorporate the skills of self-discipline, cooperation, respect, and teamwork into the classroom and carry the skills into their daily lives. These skills are to help students obtain and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Health and nutrition are included in science classes, religion classes, and guidance lessons. Students learn about the food groups and healthy food choices, respect for their bodies through the Safe Environment lessons, and care of and respect for the body in religion and science lessons. Guest speakers in middle school address topics such as drugs, alcohol, chastity, peer relationships, recognizing signs of self-harm, and mental health issues.

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

The World Language Curriculum at Saints Philip and James follows the AOP guidelines. Students in grades Pre-K 3 through eighth receive Spanish instruction once a week and are exposed to the language as well as the culture of Latin American countries and Spain. Prayers are taught in Spanish and recited in each class as well as the Virtue of the Month. Spanish religious holidays and saints are taught throughout the year.

Technology is incorporated in the classroom daily. Google Classroom as well as many other digital platforms and apps are used to practice and reinforce the curriculum. Lessons are interactive through the ViewSonic board for grades Pre-K 3 to second and Chromebooks are used by the students in grades three to eight. Seventy-five percent of the assignments are completed online and submitted electronically which assures that all students are being reached whether they are in school or virtual.

Flipgrid and classroom presentations are used to assess verbal skills and fluency. Games and songs are used to teach and enforce the material and vocabulary as well. Team building is created in a friendly environment where all students help each other and compete to do their best, to demonstrate their skill, and to build their confidence in the target language. Incorporating technology in the Foreign Language classroom leads students to be Global Digital Citizens and accept and understand cultures outside of their own community.

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

Students in Pre-K 3 to eighth grade participate in technology instruction once per week. The curriculum follows the guidelines provided by the AOP. Pre-K 3 through first grade utilize iPads to learn the basics of digital literacy. They focus on object manipulation, letter and number recognition, text-to-speech features, and basic controls. Most instruction is facilitated via the See-Saw application. Students in second to eighth grade utilize Chromebooks for all classes. Students begin with a focus on typing, computer navigation, and digital citizenship. They build proficiency with the Google suite of tools (docs, slides, sheets) as they progress through each grade. Grades four to eight learn to create multimedia designs using web tools and print 3D objects developed using CAD software. Seventh and eighth graders can learn to fly and record videos using drone technology. Saints Philip and James School offers coding via Kodable (K-5) and CodeMonkey (6-8) for students to build logic, resiliency, and transferrable skills. Faculty and students follow the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Acceptable Use Policy to promote safe and ethical use of technology in addition to a web filter to protect students on the internet.

The mission of the Catholic elementary school library program is to support and enhance all curriculum areas. Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade access the library on a weekly basis. Middle School students can sign out books on a weekly basis and utilize library materials as needed in their academic courses. The library offers an extensive selection of books and the use of media materials. Teachers foster the love of reading and incorporate library resources for independent and class projects. The curriculum supports the teaching of research strategies, developing skills to analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate information and ideas, and nurtures the Catholic heritage.

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

The religion curriculum enables the students to live the Gospel Message and fosters a community that puts faith into action for all students in Pre-K 3 through eighth grade. The curriculum is coordinated through the grade levels using a spiral approach. Daily instruction is based on the AOP guidelines and the IHM Essential Teachings. The second grade curriculum includes preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The seventh grade curriculum prepares the students for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sunday Family Masses are scheduled throughout the school year to provide students with the additional opportunities to perform the ministries of usher, lector, greeter, and altar server. Students participate in weekly school Masses. The students in each grade rotate turns to provide the leadership roles. During the year, students participate in para-liturgical services, service projects, and prayer partner activities.

The Virtue of the Month program enables faculty and students to practice a particular virtue each month. Focusing on a positive way of living and interacting with others promotes a strong community spirit and an awareness of each person created in the image of God. Implementing this program over the past five years has had a positive impact on the school environment. Students grow in self-discipline, leadership skills, and responsibility for one's choices.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

Saints Philip and James School is committed to meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Working collaboratively as a team, teachers and specialists from the Chester County Intermediate Unit, and the resource room/learning support teacher, offer small group and individual instruction and remediation to all students in kindergarten through eighth grade. When a teacher or parent has concerns about a student who may not be performing at grade level, the student is referred to the Student Support Team (SST). The student is assigned a trained case manager who gathers information from teachers and parents. A team meeting is scheduled with the case manager, the classroom teacher, the school counselor, and necessary specialists. Strengths and needs of the student are discussed and a goal is created based on the student's needs. The team brainstorms interventions to help meet the goal, and then a follow-up meeting is scheduled for six weeks later. At the follow-up meeting, the goal and progress are reviewed. If the goal has been met, a new goal may be created. If the goal has not been met, interventions may be added. If a student continues to struggle to meet goals, the parent may request a school district evaluation. Small group instruction and remediation are available to any student who is performing below grade level. Classroom curriculum support is offered to any student as needed with or without a formal evaluation or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). After a school district evaluation, if the student is found to be eligible for services, the district will share the final copy of the IEP or 504 Education Plan.

Students with an IEP who have specific, identified learning differences, meet with both the learning support teacher and CCIU specialists several times per week. Recommendations in the IEP are included in the student's plan and implemented. Classroom teachers differentiate instruction within the regular classroom.

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

Students performing above grade level are eligible for enrichment support both in their classroom and in the resource room. Individualized plans are created in collaboration with the classroom teacher, resource room teacher, and subject CCIU specialists. The math specialist may provide enrichment materials for students performing above grade level in math. Teachers are committed to differentiating instruction in the classroom to meet the needs of all students. Understanding that a student performing above grade level may not be achieving above grade level in all subjects, teachers will provide extension and enrichment activities in specific areas related to each individual student's academic strengths. Both the classroom teacher and the resource room teacher as well as CCIU specialists will collaborate to find appropriate project-based learning activities for students performing above grade level. Compacting and accelerating the classroom curriculum for above grade level students, along with facilitating interest-based projects, encourages high achieving students to make choices in designing some of their own self-directed learning.

Students who meet the criteria set by the AOP may enter the Honors Math Program after fourth grade. Guidelines for the program state that a student must have a CSI of 125 or above, Terra Nova Scores in the 90th percentile in math and above the 80th percentile in reading, and an average of 90 in math. Eighth grade students take the online Scantron Performance Series Algebra test three times a year. These students can enter high school having completed Algebra I.

Saints Philip and James School also offers extension activities for students who progress through curriculum areas quicker than their peers. Diagnostic software is used to help students learn engaging and challenging skills. Student data can help pinpoint who is above grade level in reading, mathematics, and coding. Teachers then differentiate the content and offer extensions or above grade level assignments. SSPJ also encourages students to collaborate and support each other in a social learning environment.

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

Students with diagnosed disabilities have an IEP from their school district or from private testing. The student's teacher(s) and the Guidance Counselor will meet to review the IEP and will create a student support plan to include the accommodations and modifications SSPJ is able to provide. Students who have been evaluated and diagnosed with a learning difference meet with both the learning support teacher and CCIU specialists several times per week. The CCIU reading specialist provides literacy support to students



who demonstrate a greater level of need that cannot be met with the general reading curriculum instruction. The reading specialist evaluates students to assess their level of need.

A student may be referred to the reading specialist for testing by a classroom teacher, parent, or as a result of screening tools used to monitor progress. The CCIU reading specialist identifies each student's specific reading delay. Once identified, plans are created by the specialist, and proper instructional strategies are implemented to meet each student's needs. The students in reading support will meet with the CCIU Wilson certified reading specialist weekly in individual or small group settings.

The CCIU special education certified math specialist is available to students who demonstrate difficulty in learning mathematics. Students who are referred by the classroom teacher, school principal, or parents will be screened by the math specialist to determine eligibility for services. Diagnostic assessments will be given to tailor instruction based on a student's specific strength or need. Students who qualify for CCIU Math Support meet with the math specialist one to two times per week either individually or in a small group. The math specialist provides intervention to address remedial skills as well as curriculum support.

The CCIU Speech and Language Pathologist screens and assesses students using standardized assessments of Speech and Language to determine eligibility for Speech Therapy support. If a student qualifies for Speech Therapy support, the student is offered a Speech and Language Intervention Plan (SLIP) which identifies goals to address the areas of need. When it is determined that a student is eligible for speech therapy support, the student will receive weekly speech therapy support in a small group or 1:1 setting.

The CCIU licensed school counselor meets as needed with students both individually or in small groups to support both the emotional and social needs of any student including those students who struggle to meet academic goals.

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

To support English Language Learners (ELL) at SSPJ, teachers are committed to first understanding the cultural background of each student for whom English is not their first/native language. Teachers and specialists assess and understand an individual student's skills in their native language before planning appropriate intervention and/or support for the ELL. The classroom teacher will provide tools to promote optimal learning such as preferential seating, frequent eye contact, and partnering students for shared activities. Teachers will encourage participation but will not force verbal participation. Frequent eye contact and facial expressions in the classroom contribute to the successful acquisition of language skills necessary for academic success. The use of visual aids and manipulatives also enhance and promote ease of learning for the ELL. Teachers model directions and adjust tone and language used in the classroom such as speaking slowly and enunciating carefully. Lessons and assessments are modified for ELL students. ELL students also benefit from intensive, phonics-based reading instruction from both the CCIU reading specialist and the resource room teacher each day. ELL students meet with other CCIU specialists based on screening results for skills in individual subjects. ELL students may qualify for language support from the speech therapist for intensive instruction and therapy with expressive language (grammar, syntax, organization of spoken language and receptive language needs).

Saints Philip and James School also invests in instructional technology that supports a diverse population of students. The IXL program supports an entire curriculum translated for Spanish students in math, reading and science for grades 2-8. The program for early literacy, "Reading Eggs" offers books and lessons designed in Spanish with text-to-speech translation. SSPJ utilizes Raz-Kids which has the entire curriculum translated into Spanish for the second-grade students. SSPJ offers access to instructional technology with a focus on accessibility for all students. Finally, the program for early numeracy, "Happy Numbers" offers the lessons in Spanish and are translated with a text-to-speech feature.

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

n/a



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

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

Each person is created in God’s image and deserves dignity and respect.” This belief statement is at the core of all school relationships and interactions. As a result, the positive school environment supports students in their academic, social, and emotional growth.

The academic Honor Roll for grades five to eight sets a high standard for achievement. Students strive to meet the standards and feel proud of their accomplishments. First in Math challenges students in grades kindergarten to fifth to practice and improve their math fluency and problem-solving skills. The school hall display showcases students’ level of success, and the daily announcement of the Player of the Day/Week and Team of the Week encourages the students to cheer for each other.

The Virtue of the Month program recognizes students after the First Friday school Mass who have made great effort to practice the specific virtue. Parents of students being recognized are invited to attend the awards and parishioners are welcome to stay. Emphasizing positive Christian behavior has reduced the number of demerits and has almost eradicated the need for detentions. Each upper class is assigned a younger class to form Prayer Partners. Teachers plan events to bring the students together which strengthens the school faith community.

The safety and well-being of the students is paramount in every classroom. Students can take risks and make mistakes in their academic studies and know that their peers will support their efforts. Students work in small groups on STREAM projects and appreciate the contribution of each member.

The Student Council organizes and carries out social and service activities. Some of the outreach projects are coordinated with the parish community, such as Thanksgiving food drive, contribution to Birthright, Easter outfits for needy children. Other service activities extend to the larger community, such as Soup-er Bowl collection of cans of soup for the diocesan food banks, Joy of Sox collection for the homeless, and Lenten money collection for Missionary Childhood Association. Student Council also sponsors fun activities, such as Hide the Turkey, Guess the Christmas song, accessory days, school-wide Bingo, and Spirit Days.

The Home and School Association and Room Parents host events throughout the year. Trunk or Treat (grades Pre-K – 5) and Boo-Bash (grades 6 – 8) are social events near Halloween. Santa’s Secret Shop allows the students to do Christmas shopping for their families. Catholic Schools Week includes an assembly for the students.

During the year, guest speakers address middle school students on a variety of topics. The Culture Project and Generation Life speak on relationships, chastity, social media, and influences from the culture and how to deal with them as a Christian. The Guidance Counselor supports the students’ emotional growth through classroom topics, small group discussion, and individual sessions.

Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) provides sports for students in grades five to eight. In addition, Saturday clinics host an introduction to sports for prekindergarten to grade four. After school activities include Soccer Shots, Bricks for Kidz, and the school play. Students are also involved in the Living Rosary, Living Stations, Christmas Program, Junior and Advanced Choir, Band, and piano lessons.

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

“Education is a responsibility shared by the student, the family, the faculty, and the parish community.” “Positive and supportive collaboration among the administration, faculty, parents, and students promotes a strong community spirit which is a hallmark of the school.” These belief statements provide the basis for engaging family and community members for student success and school improvement.

Regular communication with parents is essential to building positive partnerships. The principal sends monthly newsletters to parents and key stakeholders, calendar and event updates, flyers from the Home and School, and communication from the School Board and Business Manager via FACTS, the school communication platform. Classroom teachers communicate with parents via See Saw, Google Classroom, or email and send paper classroom calendars in the early childhood and primary grades.

The School Board has utilized an annual Parent Survey for School Improvement. The results are studied and communicated to the parents. The School Board recognizes the strengths of the school and sets goals based on the needs of the school for continuous improvement.

The Home and School Association (HSA) plays an active role and parents are welcome to assist in a variety of ways. Parents and community members who will have direct contact with students are required to have background clearances. Homeroom parents plan with the classroom teacher activities, such as class parties, field trips, and virtual field trips and assist with securing classroom and lunchroom helpers as needed.

The Home and School Association sponsors fundraisers to purchase school materials, technology hardware and software, classroom supplies, and school facilities improvements. The HSA works closely with the School Board of Limited Jurisdiction to ensure that the annual goals are met.

The Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) has provided speakers for the Home and School meetings based on the topics requested. Crime Victims of Chester County has provided speakers for the Home and School meetings and for middle school students. The Early Intervention department of the CCIU provides speech, OT, and learning support for the prekindergarten three and prekindergarten four students.

Chester County Foundation for Catholic Education has provided financial support through Welcome Grants, Transfer Grants, and the Tuition Care Program. They have printed signs to advertise Open Houses and other events. Business Leaders Organized for Catholic Schools (BLOCS) provides scholarship money through Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC). The parish promotes Catholic education through the Monsignor Burke scholarship. With these organizations providing financial assistance, many families have been able to afford the tuition at SSPJ.

READ program assists several first and second graders with reading. Professionals volunteer their time to come one hour per week to practice reading skills with the assigned students.

Six employees from COX Automotive volunteered to organize an Hour of Code and assist the students in grades second to eighth. After an initial assembly, the students went in grade groups to their assigned room. The students learned to work with coding software.

The administration and faculty have built positive relationships with the local school districts in which the students reside: West Chester Area School District, Downingtown Area School District, Coatesville Area School District, Owen J. Roberts School District, and Great Valley School District. The school districts provide testing for IEPs and 504s, speech evaluation, and English as a second language, as well as bus transportation, and the school lunch program.

The administration and faculty have built positive relationships with the local school districts in which the students reside: West Chester Area School District, Downingtown Area School District, Coatesville Area School District, Owen J. Roberts School District, and Great Valley School District. The school districts provide testing for IEPs and 504s, speech evaluation, and English as a second language, as well as bus transportation, and the school lunch program.

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

Saints Philip and James School believes in and promotes life-long learning for teachers, as well as students. The teachers actively pursue opportunities to further their education and knowledge of current educational trends. Teachers maintain their Pennsylvania certification by acquiring 180 hours of qualified coursework every five years. Courses, workshops, and seminars cover topics such as Writing Across the Curriculum, NBRS 2023

Common Core Math/English Standards, Executive Function Skills, Social-Emotional Learning, Instructional Software, ViewSonic boards and Google Education Applications. Continuing education classes are provided by local universities, CCIU, and AOP. The principal can apply Title II funding for in-service days and workshops. If sufficient funds are available, some Title II funds can be applied toward a college or university course for a teacher.

Professional development days are built into the yearly school calendar. Saints Philip and James administration provides workshops based upon the faculty and school goals. Local and Archdiocesan level opportunities are available throughout the year. School in-service days provide the opportunity for sharing knowledge and offer a chance for discussion among colleagues on how to best implement new information regarding trends and best practices.

Grade level and subject level discussions are a part of the faculty in-service days. All faculty members, including the principal, teachers, and subject coordinators, maintain an active dialogue to develop methodologies for student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Through the process of the Middle States self-study and accreditation, the faculty determined goals to improve students' reading, math, and science Terra Nova test scores. New software was purchased to establish benchmark testing so that teachers can provide differentiated instruction.

Teachers not only attend professional development workshops, but they are also invited to be curriculum leaders by joining Archdiocesan Curriculum Committees. Teachers and administrator have several opportunities to attend conferences sponsored by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP), the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), and Immaculata University. The SSPJ administration and faculty believe that professional development needs to be ongoing and directly connected to student learning and achievement.

First year teachers are assigned a mentor teacher and are required to complete the diocesan Induction program. This is a yearlong process to support the beginning teacher and to enhance teaching skills. The School Board and the Home and School Board have recognized the faculty and staff during Catholic Schools Week each year with a luncheon and a gift. During the two years of Covid, they had a special surprise to honor the teachers for their valiant efforts to maintain both in-person and virtual instruction so that the students never missed school. The Home and School periodically provides lunch or dinner for the faculty and hosts a monthly snack attack day.

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

The pastor and principal share the responsibilities of school leadership at Saints Philip and James School. The school is governed by the policies of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The pastor oversees the school while entrusting the day-to-day operation of the school to the principal. They work collaboratively to ensure that the mission and goals of the school are implemented in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The pastor plays an integral role in the faith formation of the students. He provides for the spiritual needs of faculty and students, celebrates Mass, attends liturgical services, and provides opportunities for confession. The pastor works with the Director of Religious Education (DRE) to prepare students for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

The principal is a spiritual and academic leader who leads by example. Each day begins with the faculty gathering for prayer and then continues to the student assembly and school-wide prayer together. "Christ is the reason for the school" and the "model for all the teachers." The principal promotes collaboration and shared responsibility by providing opportunities for faculty and staff to serve as curriculum coordinators, to chair committees, and to initiate extracurricular projects and activities for the school and students. Ongoing learning is essential to keep abreast of changes and new developments in education. Thus, the principal encourages the faculty to participate in professional development that will strengthen instruction in the classroom and to pursue educational opportunities for personal and professional growth. The mission of the Catholic school is primary. As such, the principal ensures that faculty have opportunities to strengthen their

faith and to promote service projects and outreach to those in need.

The leadership at SSPJ is characterized by mutual respect and responsibility. The principal frequently visits the classrooms, checks lesson plans, observes the growth and interaction of the students, and supports procedures and instructional strategies that promote student achievement. The Principal and Pastor, with guidance from the Office of Catholic Education, formed a School Board of Limited Jurisdiction five years ago. The formation of this Board enabled the school to initiate the Resource Program, to maintain fiscal stability during the challenges of Covid, to purchase updated technology for virtual teaching and learning, to improve facilities (new LED lighting, new school roof, new gym floor), and to provide security and safety for faculty and students.

The Home and School Association (HSA) works closely with the School Board to implement fundraisers and friend-raisers. These activities and events support the goals of the school and provide social gatherings for the students, the parents, and the families to strengthen the community spirit. In addition, the HSA leadership has invited speakers for the parents and scheduled assemblies for the students.

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

As a culturally responsive community, Saints Philip and James School emphasizes respect toward all people. Because the school is a ministry of the Catholic Church, and Catholic means universal, the community embraces all races and ethnicities. The administration and faculty maintain high expectations of achievement and behavior for all students without regard to race or ethnicity. Most of the students are Caucasian. However, all students have access to the same curriculum, resources, and support. Classroom teaching is focused on student learning for all students.

Throughout the school, classroom decorations and hall bulletin boards include pictures of children of all races and ethnicities. During Spanish classes, in addition to learning the Spanish language, students are exposed to the culture, religious celebrations, and national holidays of Spanish speaking countries. Students who are native Spanish speakers are often asked to be helpers for their peers or given more challenging work. Being bilingual is praised as a gift and talent which can be an asset in future careers. Three faculty members are bilingual and have regularly helped with communication with the Spanish speaking families regarding financial matters, absence, school assignments, and parent-teacher conferences.

A few of the Spanish speaking families had been a part of the Family Literacy Center supported by the IHM Sisters. The families desired Catholic education for their children but could not afford the tuition. SSPJ was able to provide tuition assistance for the children through EITC scholarships.

Within the student body, there are several Asian families who have roots in the Philippines, Viet Nam, Indonesia, and India. More recently, the pre-school program has enrolled children of Indian descent whose families have moved into the new developments near the school. The parents speak English in addition to their native language. The school community has welcomed these new immigrant families and has recognized the gifts and talents that the parents have to share with the school community.

The curriculum from the Office of Catholic education includes approved text series that are culturally diverse. Stories in the readers and selections of literature include a variety of diverse characters, settings, and authors. Social Studies includes the countries and cultures of the Eastern and Western Hemisphere. Classroom libraries include books whose characters are of different races and ethnicities.

Through music and cultural programs, students have had the opportunity to learn about African music and dance. They have also experienced an African American storyteller relate the story of Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement.

During Catholic Schools Week, the students learn about the work of the Missionary Childhood Association. They raise funds to support the priests, sisters, and laity who work in poor areas throughout the world where they establish schools and hospitals. The students are introduced to many cultures and grow in their awareness and appreciation of the Church's outreach.



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

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Saints Philip and James School has a history of academic excellence supplemented by a strong moral education. The instructional model relied on direct instruction and contained limited digital content. However, the pandemic shifted the school and staff needs towards a 1:1 instructional model. With grant money, the school invested significantly in the technology infrastructure during the summer of 2021-2022. The school purchased and deployed all new teacher computers, student iPads, student Chromebooks, and new 75" flat screen monitors for all classrooms. The school also upgraded the wireless network to create a more unified learning environment on campus. Saints Philip and James School was able to completely transform the academic environment into a 21st century model with students at the center of daily instruction. SSPJ has integrated technology into all instructional areas with a focus on data-driven instruction.

The most significant and measurable impact SSPJ made is to supplement the curriculum with developmentally appropriate instructional software. Teachers received training on best practices and how to apply the new software in each content area. For example, the teachers use IXL for mathematics instruction in second to eighth grade. This program individually diagnoses and recommends skills for each student based on their performance in activities and diagnostic exams. The data illuminated struggling students and helped teachers quickly pinpoint the needs of each individual child. The IXL software is adaptive and adjusts the level of rigor instantaneously to challenge students at their level. This increases engagement for all students as they work on problems tailored to their learning. Saints Philip and James School also implemented programs such as: Newsela, NoRedInk, Raz-Kids, Reading Eggs, and Happy Numbers. These programs support students in Pre-K 3 through eighth grade. Most importantly, the teacher dashboards provide data to allow for consistent differentiation.

Teachers were trained on how to view student data and make actionable decisions. For example, teachers began grouping students using strand-analysis to pair more capable students with those who need additional help. This social learning environment has empowered the students to learn and work together. Furthermore, teachers can use "trouble spots" from homework assignments on IXL to arrange whole class instruction. The data-driven model has allowed Saints Philip and James School to take the next steps towards differentiation, modification, and engagement for the students. The faculty has also implemented the ELA and Science programs from IXL for the 2022-2023 school year.

Data has allowed teachers to break apart their once homogenous group of students and better understand individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers can now assess students by looking at student progress or using small formative assessments in class. Teachers are no longer waiting for summative test results. Instead, they are continuously adjusting, modifying, and scaffolding content to meet the needs of the students. The new insights provided by student data will continue to improve instruction and engagement across all content areas.



## 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?      \$10200  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$5200
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      52%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      100%

## 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)