

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

Official School Name Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 816 Norristown Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Ambler State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19002-2103

County Pennsylvania

Telephone (215) 646-4916 Fax _____

Web site/URL <https://www.gmaelem.org/> E-mail aknapke@gmaelem.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* N/A N/A E-mail aknapke@gmaelem.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Gwynedd-Mercy Tel. N/A

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Francis Carroll
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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 | 18 |
| K | 36 |
| 1 | 34 |
| 2 | 36 |
| 3 | 34 |
| 4 | 43 |
| 5 | 43 |
| 6 | 49 |
| 7 | 54 |
| 8 | 48 |
| 9 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 |
| Total Students | 395 |

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3.5 % Asian
 - 11.7 % Black or African American
 - 2.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 74.7 % White
 - 7.8 % 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: ≤1%

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

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

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|--------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 1 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year | 1 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 2 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 | 380 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | <.01 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | <1 |

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

Non-English languages spoken within students' households include but are not limited to Spanish, Korean, Bangla, Russian, Mandarin, Arabic, Armenian, Portuguese, Hindi, and a variety of African languages including Swahili, Igbo, Ewe, Ga, Twi, and Yoruba.

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 9

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %
Total number of students served 49

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>18</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>24</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</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: 4 %
Total number of students served: 14

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 | 12 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 26 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 11 |
| 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. | 2 |

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 15:1

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 | 94% | 94% | 91% | 93% | 93% |
| 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. 2017

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

Built on Mercy, rooted in Gospel values, and committed to excellence, Gwynedd-Mercy Academy, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, is a private, Catholic, coeducational school, for students in PreK through grade eight. Empowered by an enriched educational experience and inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, students are called to service and leadership in the global community.

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

<https://www.gmaelem.org/about-us/gma-handbook>

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

Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary (GMAE) is a private, Catholic, co-educational academy with over 160 years of proven academic excellence. GMAE combines an enriched educational experience for all students with a mission of Mercy, service, and commitment to educating the whole child. Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, dedicated her life to caring for the poor, sick, and uneducated and serves as the foundation for which this educational institution was built. Catherine McAuley's tenacity, fervor, and unwavering determination to succeed in her mission inspire the students, faculty, and school community to be the best versions of themselves. Each member of the school community plays a critical role in the fabric of the school's identity and has a responsibility to act in accordance with GMAE's mission and values. The admission process for students and the hiring process for new faculty and staff includes a variety of interviews and multiple visits to the school to ensure that each type of applicant understands and recognizes the distinct impact they have within the community. Student voice and choice are encouraged and celebrated daily, as their learning experience is individualized and personalized. Intellectual curiosity is the hallmark of innovation for the students, faculty, and administration as they create, collaborate, and think critically to further GMAE's commitment to excellence.

GMAE has implemented strategic initiatives to identify and meet the academic, social, emotional, cultural, and physical needs of the students. Academically, GMAE's tiered model of support includes increased levels of differentiation based on the varying needs of the students. Students first receive differentiated instruction in their general education classrooms to support their learning needs. If it is determined that a student would benefit from greater accommodations, the next level of instructional support includes a teacher from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to provide remediation in Reading and/or Mathematics. If a student's needs warrant a psychoeducational evaluation and the results indicate a need for more individualized instruction, GMAE's McAuley Learning Center is the most individualized level of support a student receives. To meet students' social and emotional needs, the School Counselor, Dean of Student Affairs, and Dean of Academic Affairs work together to support this area of the students' development.

Through strategic decision-making and programming, GMAE has adopted the Responsive Classroom approach to proactively create a culture of health, well-being, and positive reinforcement. Additionally, a Wellness Block was added to the schedules of students in PreK through 3rd grade, which includes both Health and Character Education for one period in the seven-day cycle. The school counselor supports the students with best practices in Social and Emotional Learning and on a consultative basis. With an intentional push to have PreK through 3rd grade students increase their activity level, an additional Physical Education class was added this past year to best support their physical health and wellness. The development of a school greenhouse on campus, as well as an outdoor learning center called the Nature Nook, highlights additional unique ways GMAE enhances the student experience throughout the academic program. Athletics, Fine Arts, and extracurricular clubs also support the varying needs and interests of our students.

In 2019, after conducting extensive research on best practices in middle school programs to develop an electives program that would further enhance the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students, a new school-wide seven-day, seven-period cycle schedule was implemented. Within the scope of this new cycle schedule, middle school students are now afforded various programming opportunities to further differentiate, personalize, and enhance the academic experience. In addition to the new cycle schedule, a semester schedule provides each 6th through 7th grade student four electives courses per school year, and two elective courses twice per cycle each semester. This equates to a total of 12 electives courses throughout a student's middle school experience. Additionally, students have parameters regarding the topic of electives selected, with each year requiring one technology-focused elective and two fine arts-focused electives over the three-year span. The creation of this new schedule allows students two "Flex" periods a cycle, where they are given the opportunity among many to complete homework, work with partners on assignments, and seek extra help from GMAE's Learning Specialists. Most recently, an optional Advanced STEM class specifically for 8th grade students was added to the schedule in place of a Flex period to create advanced learning opportunities for students. These newly developed components of the academic program have proven to be incredibly successful and are widely sought after as students are eager to make their selections

year after year. Enrollment in GMAE's middle school program has also surged as students are excited at the possibilities and look forward to identifying their own unique passions and interests. Elective teachers are equally excited about creating curricula that support their chosen electives as they assist students in tapping into their limitless potential.

GMAE was a twice-recognized National Blue Ribbon School of excellence in 2017 after the initial recognition in 2007. This recognition has demonstrated the strength in the totality of the school's program and inspired the community to continuously seek out challenges that improve or enhance the educational experience for the students. Rather than pausing to celebrate the collective efforts, the National Blue Ribbon Schools award set the standard to which GMAE continues to aspire, year over year.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Reading/Language Arts is a critical piece of the academic program at GMAE and is taught simultaneously in blocks, rather than with each subject in isolation. High-quality fiction and nonfiction texts are used to teach reading for authentic literacy experiences as well as for pleasure. The reading curriculum is systematic and follows a logical sequence where students progress from emergent readers to advanced readers with smooth transitions and consistency. In the early grades, Wilson Foundations, a comprehensive word study/phonics program, is used to expand concepts of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In 5th through 8th grade, the reading program is novel-based, where by students interpret and analyze various genres of literature. In all facets of the reading/language arts curriculum, students are developing reading skills and strategies as well as literary elements and devices. Topics such as story structure, theme, compare and contrast, cause and effect, tone, mood, foreshadowing, imagery, point of view, and figurative language are recurring as levels of depth increase as students advance through the grades. The skills to create predictions, make inferences, and draw conclusions are practiced daily across all areas of the curriculum. Students study a variety of genres including mystery, fable, fantasy, historical fiction, realistic fiction, poetry, narrative, memoir, short story, biography, autobiography, and mythology in an effort to develop their love of literature. Vocabulary is taught explicitly through stories and through the Vocabulary Workshop, which is included in the Writer's Workshop approach that is used. Writers Workshop includes mini-lessons, where teachers emphasize proper grammar, mechanics, and usage skills to support both formal and informal writing. Students write narratives, expository essays, persuasive or creative writing pieces, and poetry as they work to identify their voice as a writer and make connections between reading like a writer and writing like a reader.

The teachers at GMAE utilize a variety of teaching strategies to support students and the entirety of the reading/language arts curriculum. In doing so, teachers provide direct or indirect instruction, employ investigative, experiential, and hands-on learning techniques, and strive to create interactive learning experiences to engage all students. New content is often introduced in a game-like format using technology or with opportunities to move around the classroom in an effort to help students develop an enthusiasm for the material. Differentiated instruction is provided through the use of leveled readers, in Word Study/Spelling lists, and through small group instruction or independent practice. Teachers frequently use Google Docs to provide timely feedback on students' assignments and meet with them regularly to discuss strengths and areas of growth.

GMAE recognizes and appreciates that quality, authentic assessments provide a framework for meaningful instruction. For this reason, a variety of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments are used to support and drive instruction for students. In addition to the assessments and benchmarks aligned with the curriculum, teachers develop their own metrics for student achievement and use progress monitoring techniques to ensure growth. These include DIBELS, oral fluency assessments, open-book or open-note classwork assignments, interactive projects, quizzes, tests, presentations, cold reads, literary discussions and written responses, journal reflections, and literature reviews. In the fall of 2019, a newly developed honors reading/language arts curriculum was implemented for students in 5th through 8th grade who meet specific quantitative and qualitative criteria. The philosophy behind this newly created curriculum was to further individualize and differentiate the academic program to meet the needs of advanced learners.

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

GMAE's mathematics program integrates a real-world approach using hands-on learning methodologies combined with a systematic and sequential approach. This is achieved through instruction that builds on students' prior knowledge and experiences and focuses on problem-solving and reasoning strategies that allow students to demonstrate their mathematical understanding. Through a spiraled instructional approach, students are taught concepts and skills multiple times that build on each other throughout every grade level.

Concepts, such as using an area model, span multiple grade levels and skills as students start with arrays in the early grades that eventually lead to multiplication, division, and algebra, all while identifying mathematical patterns. Additionally, students are taught to solve problems utilizing various methods that later assist them with the skills for conducting mental math and algebraic equations from as early as kindergarten. Teachers across all grade levels utilize a math workshop approach that allows students the independence to work at their individual pace during small group instruction or independent practice. Students can often be found working at interactive stations throughout the classroom and engaging with math manipulatives to provide visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic instruction to make learning more meaningful. Technology plays a critical role in the student experience by allowing students to engage with the content using interactive whiteboards. Videos highlighting the practical application of skills support rigorous programming and allow students to identify the significant role of mathematics in everyday life. Teachers also utilize a variety of online reporting tools and personalized assessments associated with specific programs to facilitate the formation of small groups and address individual needs.

Growth Measure Assessments are administered three times per year enabling teachers to receive a personalized report showing each student's level, strengths, and weaknesses. The reports can be used to drive and differentiate instruction. Traditional assessments including tests, quizzes, projects, exit tickets, and alternative assessments provide a variety of ways to assess student mastery and address individual needs. An End-of-Year assessment is administered to all current and newly enrolled students in the school. The results from these assessments enable the faculty and administration to make informed decisions regarding placement for new students. Students participate in the Continental Math League and attend various local mathematics competitions to showcase their talents.

Using standardized testing data, information from report cards, and teacher recommendations, students are eligible for Honors Math beginning in 4th grade. Honors Math accelerates the academic program for these students who possess the innate ability to work more independently and at a higher level than their same-age peers. Honors Math allows GMAE to further personalize and individualize the academic program to best meet the needs of advanced math students.

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

Students in PreK through 8th grade participate in an interactive science curriculum, applying scientific principles to solve real-world problems. In the younger grades, concepts are primarily taught through hands-on experiences. Students are introduced to the steps of the scientific method and begin working through the investigative process by asking questions and developing hypotheses. Primary grade students have the opportunity to work in the Exploratorium and greenhouse where they utilize scientific tools and learn about real-world scientists and their accomplishments. Students further investigate scientific concepts and principles through programs such as Brainpop, Mystery Doug, and Zoey and Sassafras. Some highlights include growing bean plants, caring for and hatching chicken eggs, and watching the metamorphosis of a butterfly. In 4th through 8th grade, the science curriculum takes a deeper dive into the studies of Earth, Life, and Physical Science. Students are challenged to think analytically, critically, and creatively while engaging in scientific, hands-on explorations and investigations. Students design and complete their own lab reports, learning the importance of recording and interpreting data, drawing conclusions, and sharing results. Students participate in experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting in the Exploratorium, 5th and 6th Grade Science Lab, 7th and 8th Grade Science Lab, Greenhouse, and Outdoor Classroom. Students in 7th and 8th grade students are responsible for caring for and cultivating plants in the school greenhouse. They learn about the needs of plants at different stages of growth and the benefits of composting. The older students teach the younger students through various greenhouse activities such as creating biomes in 5th and 7th grade. Some highlights in the 4th through 8th grade curriculum include the Invention Convention, a planetarium visit, growing crystals, and testing structure stability during earthquake simulations.

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

The social studies curriculum at GMAE focuses on the pillars of history, geography, and citizenship. Students are encouraged to explore the world around them and gain a greater understanding of how the past,

present, and future are all connected. They research their ancestry and the history of the world to recognize the significance of how each event and person in history impacts the world today. In the primary grades, students' roles within a democratic society are identified through an understanding of their school, family, and community, as well as their local, state, and national government. In 4th grade, students embark upon the study of Pennsylvania, learning about the people, places, and events that are vital to the understanding of their home state. In 5th and 6th grade, the field of study broadens and encompasses the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Students take part in a number of hands-on projects that enable them to learn about the history, culture, and geography of numerous foreign countries on all seven continents. As students enter 7th grade, they begin the study of the United States of America. Starting with the discovery of the New World, students analyze, through primary and secondary sources, the successes and failures of Americans trying to live up to the founding ideals of the nation. As they progress to 8th grade, students tackle the major wars and movements in United States history and their role in shaping modern society. Students throughout grade levels take field trips to local museums, monuments, capitol buildings, and war cemeteries to authenticate the learning experience and create deeper connections to the history of the world.

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

GMAE's middle school program, serving students in 6th through 8th grade affords students opportunities that are unique and personalized as faculty work tirelessly to provide personalized educational experiences that promote leadership, responsibility, and independence. The electives program, developed in 2019 in an effort to individualize student learning, supports student voice and student choice, as well as offers high-interest programming in which students explore topics above and beyond the core curriculum. Each student in 6th through 8th grade participates in four electives of their choice over the course of the school year. Examples include Sign Language, Sports Analytics, Financial Literacy, Lego Robotics, and Broadcast Journalism, just to name a few. The exposure to this diverse range of electives encourages self-actualization and inspires students to pursue interests that may align with future college and career goals.

There are other opportunities that serve as an extension to GMAE's already robust academic program for students to further develop their leadership skills. Service is an integral part of GMAE's mission, therefore the 7th and 8th grade students are called upon regularly to support various facets of service both in school and outside of school. As the leaders of the school, and under the supervision of the Director of Mission and Faith Formation, students are responsible for the collection of all monetary donations, food drives, coat drives, toy drives, clothing drives, etc. In addition to the collection, students are also responsible for the delivery of the collected items in order to see first-hand the direct need and impact of their effort. In addition to Quest after school clubs, which provide students with interest-based opportunities, students may also participate in varsity sports throughout the athletic program, Senior Choir, Band, and the 8th grade school musical. Student Council and National Junior Honor Society present academic- and leadership-based opportunities for students to further develop their communication skills, character, responsibility, citizenship, scholarship, and leadership. GMAE's student-run Morning Broadcast and Newspaper help students to recognize the important role they play in delivering news and supporting the school community.

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

GMAE established a PreK program in the fall of 2020 in response to the changing school climate and demand for consistent childcare in the greater community. This resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, as the school's largest local feeder preschool program shut down unexpectedly and several families were limited with childcare options. The PreK program at GMAE provides the foundation of the students' educational experience. In the school's faith-filled Mercy community, students are supported by a developmentally appropriate curriculum that nurtures their academic, social, and emotional growth. GMAE's PreK program fosters a sense of curiosity and inspires a love of learning from the very beginning as the individual abilities and unique talents of each child are recognized and celebrated. With an emphasis on the 21st century skills of creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, students are set up for academic success and an endless landscape for learning.

The core curriculum of GMAE's PreK program includes Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Fine Arts. Additionally, students in PreK are taught Religion each day and attend special

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areas including Library, Physical Education, Health, Character Education, Spanish, Art, Creative Movement, and Music classes.

In Reading/Language Arts students learn the alphabet letter names and the sounds they make. They recognize and spell their name and learn to hold a pencil, crayon, and marker correctly to write their names and basic sight words. Students answer questions about stories that are read to them; learn to sequence by talking about the events that occur first, next, and last; and build vocabulary by listening and repeating new words.

In Mathematics, students learn to identify and count numbers 1-10 with 1:1 correspondence; sort objects with various attributes like size, color, and shape; and differentiate between shapes. Additionally, students learn the terms and meanings of more, less than, and equal using a variety of manipulatives and a number line.

In Science, topics of study include weather, animals, and plants. In Social Studies, topics of study include community helpers, transportation, holidays, and important people in history. All instruction is supported with visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modes of instruction. Whole group, small group, and individualized instruction are utilized to meet the diverse learning needs.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

GMAE's Fine Arts program includes instruction in art and music for one hour each in the seven-day cycle. For art in PreK through 3rd Grade, students are introduced to multiple concepts and media that are the building blocks of creativity. Students explore line, color, shape, form, texture, value, and space; and often examine and emulate the art of other cultures. In 4th and 5th grade, art continues with the elements of art but delves deeper into color theory and the illusion of space. Techniques are more challenging and include a greater variety of materials. Students in 6th through 8th grade participate in art electives which include Sewing, Techstyles, Drawing and Painting, Author and Illustrator, and Architectural and Interior Design.

Music instruction in PreK through 3rd grade is focused on discovering and developing young musician skills in the elements of music: melody and pitch, beat and rhythm, timbre, form, and expression. Students accomplish these goals through singing, playing instruments, creative movement, folk dancing, composition, and more. Students in 4th and 5th grade work to build more autonomy in their music skills for each music element. In 4th grade, students begin recorder instruction. Students in 6th through 8th grade participate in music electives which include Ukulele, Video Editing, Music in the Movies, Bucket Drumming, and the 8th grade musical. Additionally, each grade level has a performance or showcase that they work on throughout the year and present to the school community. These performances create opportunities for every student's talents to be recognized and celebrated.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Health and Physical Education program inspires students to lead healthy and physically active lifestyles for a lifetime. Through quality instruction, a student culture is built that celebrates differences in ability and works to empower others. GMAE educates the whole student physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially through innovative and stimulating teaching practices. The Physical Education Department strives to develop physically literate individuals who demonstrate an awareness of personal space; respond to visual and verbal signals; perform activities requiring body management; meet age-appropriate fitness criteria; recognize changes in heart rate during exercise and rest; demonstrate basic locomotor and non-locomotor movement in combination; demonstrate movement safety of self and others using various movements and pathways; and perform teacher-led strength training and exercises to increase muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility.

Aligned with the physical education curriculum is the health curriculum. Students in PreK through 3rd grade learn about nutrition, healthful living, safety and injury prevention, organs and body systems, conflict resolution, mental and emotional health, and the importance of physical activity. Students in 4th and 5th grade delve deeper into the study of nutrition, exercise, and physical activity; and investigate the human body systems. Students in 6th grade learn about the four dimensions of health--physical, mental/emotional, social, and spiritual health, while 7th grade health is about empowering students to be strong advocates of their own health in avoidance of harmful substances such as illegal drugs, nicotine, and alcohol. Students analyze media advertisements, resist peer pressure, and explain factors influencing childhood and adolescent drug use. In 8th grade, students learn athletic training concepts, preventable diseases, the importance of physical activity, and goal setting.

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

GMAE's World Language program offers Spanish to PreK in two half-hour classes per cycle. Kindergarten through 5th grade students receive a semester of French and a semester of Spanish instruction each school year. Specifically, kindergarten through 3rd grade attend one total hour of World Language classes per cycle, and 4th and 5th grade students attend two total hours of World Language classes per cycle. Beginning in 6th grade, students select between French and Spanish to specialize in for the remainder of their middle school experience. Middle school students attend three one-hour classes of World Language per cycle.

The focus of World Language instruction is communication and comprehension, as well as an appreciation of the culture. The goals of this program are to foster global awareness and to encourage students to use their language skills in real-life settings. Topics in PreK through 3rd grade include vocabulary and simple expressions for communicating names, greetings, numbers, colors, activities, weather, clothing, animals, food, parts of the body, and basic commands and responses. Students in 4th and 5th grade explore these concepts in greater depth with the formation of sentences and questioning. Students in 6th through 8th grade achieve basic communication skills in both receptive language and expressive language for formal and informal greetings, nationalities, francophone countries, and weather. Students compare the target culture and their own culture and recognize how various traditions influence their own country and other countries around the world.

2d. Technology/library/media

Students learn how to use digital tools to communicate and work collaboratively and to support and demonstrate learning. They engage in critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students learn about the importance of practicing digital citizenship in safe and responsible ways. In kindergarten through 3rd grade, the primary goal is to guide students as they master functional technology tools utilized within the curricular areas. Students learn the parts and functions of desktop computers and practice keyboarding and mouse skills. They explore coding and programming through educational games and apps on their iPads, investigate block coding with robots, and create both green screen and stop-motion movies. In addition, they will begin to use Google tools such as Docs and Slides to demonstrate learning and collaborate with other students. In 4th and 5th grade, students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, develop innovative products and processes using technology, and use digital tools to communicate and work collaboratively. They use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. By practicing digital citizenship, students demonstrate safe and responsible use of technology. They more thoroughly employ Google tools such as Docs, Slides, Sheets, and Sites to demonstrate learning and collaboration while also utilizing creative digital tools, such as Canva and iMovie. In 6th through 8th grade, students participate in a variety of technology electives including Coding, STEM, Financial Literacy, TechStyles, LEGO Robotics, Video Editing, Sports Analytics, Podcasting, and Broadcasting/Digital Media.

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

Public Speaking at GMAE is a class 5th through 8th grade students participate in for one hour, once a cycle. Through this course, students learn the fundamental skills of speaking in front of an audience and best

practices for creating engaging presentations. At each grade level, students conduct their own research based on topics that are either teacher-selected or based on their own interests. In addition to the varying topics students are expected to present, they also practice writing speeches for different types of audiences. These audiences may include a room of investors looking to buy into a new product, a room of people looking to be inspired, and children wanting to learn something new through a how-to project. Speeches may also be persuasive to change the behaviors of the audience. Students have many opportunities to become better speakers and presenters through Public Speaking. This course focuses on building confidence when speaking in front of peers, as well as creating and delivering effective digital presentations. Students also practice being attentive and supportive audience members and encouraging their classmates as they present to the group.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students at GMAE have varying instructional needs. For this reason, a tiered approach is utilized to meet the individual needs of each student. With each tier, the level of support increases in order to best identify what the student needs to be successful. The first tier consists of in-classroom support, which is provided with the intention of setting each child up for academic success. Strategies teachers use to provide this tier of support may include preferential seating, small group instruction to reinforce content or skills, 1:1 assistance in responses to questions and answers, cueing, and redirection. In kindergarten and 1st grade, teachers teach Foundations as a general phonics program and support with remediation for students who need additional repetition. In the primary grades, teachers utilize a workshop model with leveled readers for students in kindergarten through 3rd grade, with built-in levels of differentiation to meet each student where they are. Additionally, students receive differentiated instruction in mathematics with a small group and 1:1 support as students navigate through the curriculum. In addition to curriculum benchmarks and assessments aligned with the topics addressed, students are assessed three times a year using DIBELS Reading and on their Oral Language Fluency, as well as through DIBELS Math. The data from these research-based assessments is then used to make informed decisions about programming and the best way to support the individual needs of each learner. Students may be referred for additional learning support through the MCIU, GMAE's second tier of support, and participate in the MAP assessment in order to determine if they are eligible for that level of assistance. Students who have identified learning differences are referred to the McAuley Learning Center, GMAE's third tier of support.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

GMAE recognizes the critical importance of keeping most advanced learners challenged and engaged in the learning process. The teachers and administrators have worked tirelessly to ensure that the academic needs of these students are met. Students who are identified as needing advanced or accelerated instruction receive initial support through differentiated instruction across the curriculum in their general education classrooms. Teachers utilize various assessment tools to identify students' strengths and then adapt their instruction accordingly. Additional opportunities for advanced learning exist for all students in kindergarten through 8th grade through GMAE's Creative Thinking Skills class. This special area class offered once a cycle, promotes higher-level thinking skills and encourages students to think "outside the box." For students who require challenges that necessitate differentiation beyond the scope of grade level instruction, GMAE offers both Honors Math and Honors English/Language Arts classes for qualified students in 4th grade through 8th grade. The Gifted and Talented Enrichment Program for eligible students in 4th grade through 8th grade also provides opportunities for students to accelerate their learning and participate in critical thinking challenges. Lastly, Advanced STEM is an optional course for students in 8th grade and offers advanced hands-on STEM skills for students with a special interest in this area. Additionally, 4th through 8th grade students have the ability to earn Academic Honors when grades of 90% or higher are earned in every subject area or Distinguished Honors when grades of 95% or higher are earned in every subject area. Programs such as the National Junior Honor Society also motivate students to perform above grade level, as scholarship is an integral component of the criteria used to determine eligibility.

3c. Students with disabilities:

The McAuley Learning Center, GMAE's third tier of support, provides academic instruction to students to actualize their potential. Once it is recognized that a student is still in need of remediation after exceeding the levels of support provided by both the first-tier and second-tier learning supports, GMAE's Learning Support Team recommends that the student be administered a psychoeducational evaluation.

Students who have been evaluated and identified with a learning difference will qualify for support from the McAuley Learning Center. This support is provided through the use of research-based best practices and 1:1 programming, the Wilson Reading Program or Orton Gillingham instruction, small group instruction, and push-in support in the general education classroom. Students in the McAuley Learning Center who are eligible for support services receive an "Accommodation Checklist" with specific accommodations and instructions for their teachers based on recommendations documented in the school psychologist's report. The Learning Support Team meets with the teachers and the parents of the child to review the accommodations and makes modifications or recommendations as needed. Parents meet with the Learning Support Teacher or Director of the McAuley Learning Center every eight to ten weeks to monitor progress and ensure the plan is working effectively. Students who demonstrate adequate progress may "graduate" from the McAuley Learning Center once it is deemed that support services are no longer required to achieve academic success.

Through differentiated instruction, the use of accommodation checklists created by the school counselor listing in-class supports, and consistent communication between faculty and parents, students are equipped with the skills necessary to maximize their opportunities for learning.

3d. English Language Learners:

GMAE does not have any students who require explicit instruction as English Language Learners.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

GMAE has adopted the Responsive Classroom approach with extensive training and opportunities to engage students in a positive environment that supports their overall growth. Utilizing Responsive Classroom techniques teachers promote a student-centered, social, and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It consists of a set of research and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers. The Responsive Classroom approach reinforces GMAE's philosophy that students feel safe, included, and valued through patient and active listening. The Responsive Classroom program helps schools cultivate a classroom community that validates students' needs for belonging and significance.

As a Mercy community, faculty, staff, and students are called to reverence the dignity of each person. Creating a spirit of hospitality is the hallmark of the legacy of Catherine McAuley, so expectations and skills for listening and speaking are not only taught but instructional time is structured to reflect the belief that students' voices and ideas are essential. This school and classroom management program focuses on the important work of building relationships and school and classroom communities. Students who feel respected, trusted, and part of a community are more intrinsically motivated to follow school and classroom rules. This program gives teachers the tools to set up a positive learning community from the first day of the school year. Through explicit and well-thought-out instruction, students are introduced to classroom routines that will support them throughout the school year. Teachers work alongside their students to develop classroom expectations.

In addition to integrating the Responsive Classroom approach, GMAE identifies various ways to ensure students feel appreciated and celebrated each day. Sharing student birthdays over the announcements and highlighting individual achievements on the student-run Broadcast each morning excite students as they listen for their recognition. Students in each homeroom have the opportunity to earn "Mercy-Maker" awards each month, be recognized with Academic Honors certificates at the end of each trimester, and be celebrated for their extracurricular accomplishments.

One unique component of GMAE's program is the ability to have a school-wide community gathering one morning each cycle. During this gathering, the entire student body, faculty, staff, and invited guests gather to recognize student accomplishments. Students create presentations based on class projects or initiatives and are motivated to showcase their skills and talents. These opportunities build students' confidence and independence as they actualize their goals and grow academically, socially, and emotionally to be the best versions of themselves.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In 2020, GMAE was the recipient of the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon School Award as the result of a multi-year commitment to support Care for the Earth, one of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. This award would not have been possible without the collaboration and enthusiasm of the entire school community, local organizations, and sustainability agencies. GMAE made several deliberate changes to the day-to-day programming as well as facility upgrades to support this important initiative and aligned to three pillars of the school's goals: Reduce environmental impact and cost, improve the health and wellness of the students and staff, and ensure effective environmental and sustainability education. GMAE's commitment to these practices provided opportunities for the school to engage and leverage the resources within the local community to adopt more environmentally sustainable practices and take actionable steps that will better the world.

In taking strides to reduce environmental impact and costs, GMAE has made very specific, strategic decisions that inspire teachers, students, and parents to be conscientious about how their actions impact the environment. This was accomplished by reducing the use of natural resources, equipping classrooms with motion-sensor lighting, installing valves on every steam radiator to control the temperature more efficiently

throughout the building, and most recently replacing all lighting throughout the campus with high energy-efficient LED lighting. GMAE is 1:1 with technology and constantly seeks new ways to reduce environmental impact. Used textbooks, novels, supplies, uniforms, and furniture are donated each year to schools stricken with poverty, and the school partners with local organizations several times throughout the year in holding donation drives for used clothing and household items.

In the spring of 2019, GMAE celebrated the installation of the greenhouse with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and in 2021 the school celebrated with the installation of the outdoor classroom, also known as the Nature Nook. These new developments have led students to actively participate in the planting of tomatoes, basil, dill weed, kale, Buttercrunch lettuce, Bibb lettuce, carrots, microgreens, and sunflowers, while the outdoor classroom enriches the academic and social-emotional experience for the students.

As a school, GMAE recognizes its critical role in educating the leaders of tomorrow. This includes providing unique cross-curricular opportunities that support environmental and sustainability education and STEM skills that will prepare students for jobs that have yet to exist. Many of the opportunities for the students exist because of the support from GMAE's Parents' Organization, as they provide the resources for assemblies, field trips, STEM Nights, author visits, and other various activities all centered around the themes of Environmental Education and Sustainability. This initiative is only one example of the ways in which the school community works together towards the same goal and is dedicated to seeing it come to fruition.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

A dedicated effort has been made to ensure that GMAE's faculty and staff feel valued and supported. This strategic approach has focused on the retention and overall well-being of the educators as professionals and individuals while ensuring they know how appreciated they are. With an emphasis on making sure each faculty and staff member feels seen, heard, and celebrated, special attention has been given to increasing the morale of the building. An example of such deliberate planning include but are not limited to the hiring of a building substitute to reduce the need for faculty to cover classes in the event of an absence, the gifting of Amazon gift cards to all faculty and staff to assist with back-to-school expenses at the beginning of the year, surprise celebration pop-ups in the faculty room, hot coffee and tea provided on a daily basis, "Spin It to Win It" special treats thoughtfully planned throughout the school year, and the creation of community goals supported by Board of Trustees' endorsed bi-annual community bonuses.

Through the lens of professional development, weekly after school meetings allow teachers to collaborate, examine data, and develop ideas for differentiated instruction. During this time, teachers share lesson implementation outcomes, review curricular goals to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment, and receive deliberate development in best practices that support the entirety of the academic program. Through a series of workshops provided by the school counselor and outside organizations, the school develops and cultivates a stronger school-family-community partnership in order to share responsibility in supporting students' success in school and through life. Collaboratively, faculty, staff, and parents develop school-wide community-building events.

Teachers are empowered with technology resources to design technology-enriched learning environments to assist students in attaining curriculum objectives. A variety of collaborative opportunities are provided to learn and develop technology skills to enhance instruction, presentation, and communication within the classroom. There are a number of technology tools available to engage students during the process of determining the appropriate instruction for each student's level. GMAE's Middle School Electives program gives teachers the opportunity to teach their passions as well as students the opportunity to choose what they want to learn, research, modify, build, invent, and create during their time in the classroom. It also gives students the ability to break barriers, pursue their passion, explore topics outside the classroom setting, and have a choice in what they want to learn. The constant evolution of the academic program and the adoption of new curricular programming keeps teachers abreast of the newest educational trends and methodologies as they continuously strive to enhance the learning experience for their students.

4. School Leadership:

GMAE is a sponsored institution of the Sisters of Mercy and a member of the Mercy Education System of the American (MESA). Governance is shared with a Board of Trustees whose members are committed to the mission of Mercy education. The role of the Board is delineated in by-laws approved by the MESA Board of Directors.

A new leadership structure, embracing a Head of School and Dean leadership model that includes a Dean of Academic Affairs and a Dean of Student Affairs, was implemented on July 1, 2021, after the Board of Trustees, in consultation with MESA, realigned the organizational structure in support of the ongoing strategic plan to further enhance the student experience, sustainability efforts, and commitment to academic excellence with Mercy at the core.

The Head of School is accountable to the Board of Trustees and responsible for stewarding the mission, vision, and overall operations of GMAE. Through partnership and collaboration, the Head of School fosters and progresses the sustainability of the Academy's 160-year tradition of Mercy and academic excellence for future generations of students.

The Dean of Academic Affairs is responsible for and oversees all facets of planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curricular and instructional program and chairs the Academic Affairs Committee. The Dean of Student Affairs coordinates, plans, and facilitates programming that positively supports the social and emotional development of students within a safe and secure setting and chairs the Student Affairs Committee. In addition to the Deans, GMAE's administrative staff, all leaders with unique backgrounds and skills, report directly to and works collaboratively with the Head of School. The administrative team oversees specific areas of responsibility that create and sustain a learning community, promoting academic excellence, leadership, and Mercy values.

A collaborative culture in which faculty members are respected as teacher leaders is critical to best meet the academic, developmental, and spiritual needs of the students. Examples of teacher leadership opportunities include but are not limited to serving on the Academic Affairs Committee, Student Affairs Committee, and Professional Development Committee to facilitate goal-oriented collaboration among the faculty. The faculty and staff also support one another to achieve GMAE's Community Goals, encouraged by the Board of Trustees, in the areas of Enrollment, Non-Tuition Revenue, and Employee Innovation of Holistic Curricular and Extracurricular Initiatives and Programming.

Parental leadership and partnerships are essential for student achievement and school success. GMAE is most fortunate to partner with parent leaders in all aspects of the school community. This integral partnership creates, sustains, and enhances the unique educational experience for each student. Parents serve in leadership capacities within the Parents' Organization and Development Council. In addition, parents continue to be critical stakeholders in facilitating enhanced student learning opportunities, serving as homeroom parents, mentoring club and service projects, and coaching.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy play an integral role in how GMAE addresses the diverse needs of all students, families, and staff. These Critical Concerns include the welfare of the school community through the topics of Racism, Immigration, Nonviolence, Women, and Care for the Earth. In recognizing that all are God's children, GMAE celebrates the uniqueness of each individual regardless of race, religion, ability, or socioeconomic status. Respect, appreciation, and acceptance of each person are the standard for all students and faculty. Teachers and staff have received specific diversity, equity, and inclusion training aligned with the mission of Mercy and the Critical Concerns. The school administrators and School Counselor have attended workshops on best practices to ensure equity within the school community.

Curricula used to support instruction are purchased with an expansive lens that includes an emphasis on diversity in culture, experience, and theme. Novels and stories are well-vetted and thoughtfully chosen to ensure their contents and book covers reflect students of all backgrounds. This includes everyday literature, stories used for read-alouds, library titles, and options for summer reading. Teachers are provided with

various professional development opportunities throughout the year to support diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices. As an example, GMAE's 2020 Summer Learning Institute (a curated, 30-day calendar of virtual professional development offerings throughout the summer) included Tools for Antiracist Teaching, Social Emotional Learning to Combat Racism and Unconscious Bias, Social Justice for Educators, Race/Inequity/Solidarity/Empathy, Three Tiers of Equity and Inclusion, and Cult of Pedagogy-Diversity Strategies. In 2021, teachers participated in Amanda Gorman's read-aloud and discussion of her picture book, *Change Sings* with Loren Long to discuss how anything is possible when voices join together. Additionally, students in PreK through 3rd grade participate in weekly Character Education classes with themes supporting antiracism, belonging, kindness, and acceptance of others, among other topics to further develop their personal growth. The religion curriculum includes diversity lessons focused on "Respect for All Races," and the 7th and 8th grade curriculum highlights Catholic Social Teachings and Multicultural Connections. Catholic Social Teachings on Life and Dignity of the Human Person are most age-appropriate for discussions and activities on acceptance, racial differences, and social justice.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Throughout the entirety of GMAE's academic program, the practice of providing a student-centered approach has proven to be most instrumental in achieving student and school success. This approach is the foundation of every decision that is made and at the core of instructional practices. Every single student's educational program is individualized and personalized to assist in their academic, social, and emotional growth. Administrators make an effort to address every student by name; greet students in carline each morning and afternoon as they enter and exit the school; and are visible in classrooms, at lunch or recess, and in the hallways to build relationships with each student in the building.

As strategic school-wide goals and long-term plans are developed, tremendous emphasis is placed on the student experience to ensure that a student-centered approach is at the heart of everything GMAE does. Student artwork is beautifully displayed throughout the hallways as well as athletic trophies and achievements to be sure all students have the opportunity to be recognized. Flexible seating in all PreK through 8th grade homerooms was purchased to meet the physical and spatial needs of the students. Teachers employ research-based best practices to build connections and meet the varying needs of their students. Thoughtful and authentic lesson planning incorporates students' interests, abilities, and strengths to motivate and inspire them. Differentiated instruction and assessments support each learner in maximizing their innate capabilities. A "Wellness Block," created this past school year, combines Health and Character Education for students in kindergarten through 3rd grade to further support students' social and emotional well-being. Time for physical education class was also increased in these grades as students and research showed a need for increased physical activity throughout the school day. The Middle School Electives program affords students voice and choice as they explore a variety of topics. Students complete surveys to evaluate GMAE's programming, and the information assists in planning future goals and initiatives. The development of the Advanced STEM class as an option in 8th grade offers students an additional class to hone specific STEM skills using advanced tools and equipment. School-wide pep rallies are held during each fall, winter, and spring sports season to recognize the athletes' accomplishments, while each grade has a fine arts performance to showcase their talents. After school Quest clubs provide students with ways to pursue their interests in a safe school setting with their teachers or other community members.

These intentional practices support GMAE's students in ways beyond measure. Their enthusiasm for the school extends past graduation as they frequently return to visit their teachers and share stories that influenced who they have become as individuals, leaders, and lifelong learners. GMAE recognizes that it is not just a responsibility to educate children but that the school has an obligation to create opportunities that shape tomorrow's leaders, one student at a time.

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? \$14677
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$6399
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 12%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 15%

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)