



## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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. 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.

## **PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

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All data are the most recent year available.

### **DISTRICT**

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

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### **SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)**

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 20

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

<b>Grade</b>	<b># of Males</b>	<b># of Females</b>	<b>Grade Total</b>
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	13	15	28
<b>1</b>	18	22	40
<b>2</b>	18	22	40
<b>3</b>	19	18	37
<b>4</b>	22	19	41
<b>5</b>	15	28	43
<b>6</b>	27	22	49
<b>7</b>	25	20	45
<b>8</b>	23	30	53
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>			<b>376</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
3 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
7 % Hispanic or Latino  
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
79 % White  
9 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 1%

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

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	4
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	415
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.01
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 0%  
 Total number of students served: 0

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u><b>Full-Time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>18</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>34</u>	<u>6</u>

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

21:1

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

	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university \_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in a community college \_\_\_\_\_ %

Enrolled in vocational training \_\_\_\_\_ %

Found employment \_\_\_\_\_ %

Military service \_\_\_\_\_ %

Other \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_ **0%**

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

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Strongly rooted in Catholic values, Holy Spirit Regional Catholic School's (HSRCS) mission is to promote excellence in the whole person and reflect each student's unique qualities in kindergarten through eighth grade. HSRCS students are provided daily opportunities through a challenging, differentiated curriculum in a technologically-rich environment. The school's vision is to help students to be faith-filled individuals as they discover and utilize their gifts and talents through academic success and service to others.

Founded in 1960, HSRCS experienced a rebirth after a tornado destroyed the campus in November, 1989. That was the catalyst for a renewed vision and mission for HSRCS to ensure strength and longevity. An annual fundraising event called Building an Academic and Spiritual Heritage (BASH) was instituted to support current school operations and contribute to the school's long-term financial security. Classes were doubled to accommodate the growing desire for a Catholic education in the community. HSRCS is now blessed to see children and grandchildren of alumni returning to the school.

HSRCS fosters a creative, nurturing environment steeped in Catholic values embracing the truth that each child is created for his or her own purpose by God. The faculty incorporates gospel values into lesson plans across the curriculum, leading students to a strong faith that can guide them throughout life. Student-led Masses encourage talents in drama, music, and public speaking while providing the opportunity to learn and teach. The classes take proud ownership of these liturgies and, in turn, appreciate the efforts of others.

As a faith-based school, service is a vital part of student life. Participating in community projects and various charitable activities for those in need gives students the experience of living gospel values. Students receive the support of volunteers from the church community who minister to the school as reading buddies and tutors. As a result of these experiences, the children witness to and partake of Catholic values in action.

Accredited by SACS CASI for over ten years, HSRCS maintains high standards incorporating the Alabama State Course of Study (ALCOS) with the Diocesan Benchmarks to elevate the requirements set forth in the state standards and enhance a differentiated curriculum. The school maintains these standards to enhance pedagogically sound practices through annual school improvement plans, five-year self-studies, and diocesan reaccreditation visits. HSRCS offers Advanced Mathematics in grades 4 through 8 and Advanced Literature to eighth graders, and all students participate in an introductory Spanish language program. HSRCS students receive recognition in the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP), excel in Robotics and Math Team competitions throughout the state, and successfully compete in the Alabama Geography Bee. HSRCS students receive awards and honors for academic excellence and continue to excel and earn commendable scholarships in high school and beyond. Extracurricular activities for the arts provide not only academic benefits, but help students to become well-rounded persons through teamwork, cooperation, and presentation skills.

A resource team exists for the purpose of assisting parents and teachers in establishing the best plan of action to ensure that students are afforded academic support. Utilizing the skills of the school counselor, the resource teacher, principal, and classroom teachers, this team works with parents to promote in-class and at-home success.

HSRCS literally serves a community of rocket scientists. Between NASA and its related business partners, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the facilities of Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville is filled with highly educated professionals who expect proficiency in the latest technology. The Holy Spirit Foundation and PTO financially support HSRCS to help meet advancements in technology in productive

ways which benefit both teachers and students. Contributions of hardware and software augment teacher effectiveness: each classroom is equipped with an LCD projector and interactive whiteboard. In addition, a set of laptops and iPads® on mobile carts are available for in-class instruction. Students make frequent visits to the computer lab for group instruction, and there are computers in each classroom for instructional use. Students use technology to demonstrate mastery across the curriculum. Through a powerful online administrative program and the school's website, technology serves as an integral part of communication between school and home.

In the last fifty years, HSRCS has grown steadily from four classrooms of students taught by nuns to a vibrant K-8 accredited school. HSRCS has remained true to its vision and mission while embracing the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School would honor this dedication and commitment to developing lifelong learners and promoting excellence in the whole person.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

A. The faculty of HSRCS takes great pride in students' annual performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills® (ITBS®) and Iowa Assessments™. Percentiles and stanine scores are shared with prospective families and are a great recruiting tool, as parents often compare scores of schools in the area in order to make future educational plans. Prior to 2012, HSRCS administered the ITBS®(Form A) each spring to grades 3, 5, and 7. As of 2012, HSRCS administers the Iowa Assessments™ (Form E). Every student, regardless of ability level or diagnosed learning disability, is administered the test. At HSRCS, student instruction is centered on the ALCOS and the Diocesan Benchmarks and not test target skills. HSRCS does not take time out from instruction to prepare students for taking standardized tests, nor does the faculty teach for the test. The scores stand by themselves.

From 2009-2011, ITBS® scores generally ranged from the 72nd to the 87th percentile and were consistently in the 7th stanine for all grades 3, 5, and 7. In 2012, the diocese and HSRCS administered the Iowa Assessments™ with updated norms. HSRCS's 2012 Iowa Assessments™ average grade-level scores in grades 3, 5, and 7 ranged from the 72th to the 90th percentile nationally. HSRCS's 2012 Iowa Assessments™ average grade-level stanine scores ranged from the 6th to the 8th stanine nationally, with 65% of these scores in the 7th stanine or above. The 2012 Iowa Assessments™ were more rigorous, assessed a wider range of skill, and required more higher order thinking. HSRCS's scores were still outstanding.

B. What is striking about test scores over the last five years, and even over the past ten years, is the consistency of the scores. Despite turnover of faculty members, especially in those grades administering the tests, and turnover in student enrollment, the ITBS® scores, almost without exception, have remained outstanding.

Grade 3 ITBS® Total Math scores have been consistent, as well as scores in the subtest categories of Concepts and Estimation and Problem Solving. The grade 3 Computation subtest scores rose from the 63rd percentile in 2009 to the 74th percentile in 2011. In grade 5, ITBS® Total Math scores rose from 2009-2011. Scores in the Concepts and Estimation subtest rose from the 76th to 86th percentile. Scores in the Problem Solving subtest rose from the 73rd to 81st percentile. Computation subtest scores rose from the 71st to 78th percentile. Total Math scores rose from the 80th to 84th percentile. In 7th grade, within the same time frame, ITBS® Total Math scores improved in the Concepts and Estimation subtest from the 68th to 81st percentile. The Problem Solving subtest improved from the 67th to 78th percentile. The Computation subtest improved from the 45th to 75th percentile, and Total Math improved from the 62nd to 81st percentile.

From 2009-2011, the number of 5th and 7th graders at the proficient or advanced levels had continually increased, while in 2009 and 2011, 85% of the 3rd graders excelled at the proficient or advanced levels. In 2011, approximately 81% of students in tested grades scored at the proficient or advanced levels. Further improvement in math scores is expected due to current practices such as the purchase and use of new, technologically supported, math text series for kindergarten through grade 8 and Algebra I, an increased collaboration by the faculty on the consistent methodology of Mathematics across the grade levels, with an emphasis on computation, and the implementation of Simple Solutions, a math skills review book for grades 3, 5, and 7.

While reading scores remain consistently excellent, analysis of subtests has provided target areas for improvement. Skills that promote reading comprehension will be targeted in future school improvement plans. The 2008 adoption of an elementary reading series, with an emphasis on grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, has already shown marked improvement in Language Arts overall. It is expected that the

scores will continue to improve with an increased focus on the standards of teaching and the expectations of learning in both the elementary and middle school Reading and Language Arts programs.

The 2012 Spring Iowa Assessments™ contained different subtests, measured against new norms, and provided results in a new format of quartiles. In grade 3, 86% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Reading and 90% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Mathematics. In grade 5, 77% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Reading and 86% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Mathematics. In grade 7, 85% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Reading and 82% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in Mathematics.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

HSRCS partners with the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama to administer tests that will be both valid and reliable. The diocese has charged each of the schools under its direction with administration of the ITBS®, Iowa Assessments® and the Cognitive Abilities Test®. The tests are administered in grades 3, 5, and 7. Teachers in those homeroom grades meet with the principal to discuss test administration prior to the days in which testing takes place. This includes discussions about students who may be challenged by the general testing environment, scheduling of tests in each grade level, and any record keeping that should take place during and after testing.

After testing is completed and the principal has reviewed the testing results from Riverside Testing Services, a second meeting takes place. This meeting allows teachers to review results, discuss concerns, and begin the overall process of evaluation for possible modifications or alterations to current teaching practices. As educators, HSRCS teachers and administration understand that standardized tests are one tool in an arsenal of assessment data. These scores are meant to complete a picture that has been created during the course of an entire year of assessment, evaluation, conferencing, and documentation. Teaching to the test is not the goal at HSRCS. Faculty share the philosophy that students are learning for life. Any tool that gives a clearer picture of a student's abilities or difficulties is used in conjunction with standardized test results.

Therefore, once cumulative data are available from the standardized tests, the task of selected faculty is to examine overall class performance in each of the test areas. Once completed, individual students scoring in lower percentiles are identified so as to enhance their educational environment and differentiate instruction to meet those students' needs. In order to do this, teachers create lessons for the classroom that will reinforce concepts, improve and extend learning, and reteach as necessary. Within those lessons, teachers utilize techniques, strategies, and tips from myriad shared resources. Using standardized testing results, teachers assess how classrooms can become better performing units through tested, proven programs such as those used in the subjects of Mathematics and Language Arts and is facilitated through the use of innovative, technologically creative lessons with Promethean boards and its component software.

Beginning in third grade, standardized test results are used to place students in both advanced and grade level math classes. Seventh grade scores are also used for student placement in advanced literature classes for the upcoming year. Diocesan policy does not allow publication of results to the community-at-large. However, individual results are sent home to parents with information on how to interpret the data. Teachers are available for conferencing and to answer any questions parents might have. In addition, when scores reflect significant deficits and there is a need for more extensive interventions, the Care Team meets to give further assistance and make available additional academic and administrative resources. Furthermore, the school counselor uses the results as criteria for selection in the Duke TIP program, which offers opportunities for enrichment programs for gifted children. At HSRCS, each step in this process is central to the success of students and allows for the teaching staff to best facilitate the development of academic skills for all students.

For planning and development, the School Leadership Team (SLT) uses assessment data to create target areas within the school improvement plan. This team consists of teachers from various grade levels and members of the administrative staff, along with a parent liaison, who are charged with setting goals for school improvement each year. The selections of the math and Language Arts series, as well as the school's current technology were, in part, generated through analysis done by the SLT. This collaboration of the administration, faculty and staff, as well as parent feedback, drives a dynamic assessment process resulting in effective monitoring of student achievement. Finally, during the process of accreditation, the faculty and administration compile all data related to testing scores over a five-year period, which allows for long-range planning and goal setting.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

HSRCS prides itself on building strong relationships among all schools by encouraging frequent sharing and discussion of strategic skills. HSRCS teachers attend the annual Superintendent's Conference Day with teachers from across the diocese, where cross curricular and grade level meetings enable HSRCS teachers to share successful teaching strategies, exchange effective lessons, and address curricular concerns. At one such meeting, the librarian drew from HSRCS students' preferences to make book recommendations for other K-8 librarians; a middle school teacher shared methods of using ActiVotes in both history and math classes; and another teacher shared a tailored, AIMS, Mini-Metric Olympics unit with fellow math teachers.

Each semester, the Huntsville/Madison County Private School Association sponsors a rotating, grade-level specific forum. Within this forum, HSRCS teachers present successful lessons, effective techniques, and quality resources to colleagues. The academic resource teacher attends monthly meetings with this association and is able to exchange innovative ideas, which are then implemented into classrooms to improve classroom dynamics and enhance instructional practices. Collaboration between these professionals continues throughout the year.

A team of HSRCS teachers was chosen and trained by the Superintendent of Schools to train diocesan teachers the Understanding by Design (UbD) approach to instructional planning and assessment. UbD units were published on a diocesan-created, collective website that is accessible to all teachers. Other contributions of faculty members include internet communities such as ALEX (Alabama Learning Exchange) and edWeb.net, teacher blogs, and shared e-mail communications related to lesson planning and other professional interests. Teachers have submitted lesson plans and gained publication of standard specific lessons to ALEX. In preparation for state and diocesan implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), others have recommended current reading and webinar resources related to CCSS on edWeb.net community digests.

HSRCS maintains a working relationship with local and online colleges by providing internships for student and pre-service teachers. Veteran teachers share effective pedagogy and model classroom management strategies to prepare future teachers to successfully implement techniques within their classrooms. The SLT was invited by SACS CASI to present at a statewide meeting of teachers, administrators and school board members. The team shared an innovative method used for completing the SACS CASI reaccreditation process. The principal attends collaborative meetings and symposiums with other administrators to discuss strategies that might enhance the curriculum and the overall academic success of the schools within the diocese. These collegial activities create a supportive and well-informed professional environment.

### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

HSRCS fosters a thriving environment by building strong partnerships between the school, families and the community. To create this environment HSRCS focuses on three areas: fellowship, service and outreach, and communication. Each area brings faculty and staff, students and parents, and the community as a whole together to build a stronger, more effective program.

The central fundraising effort is the annual BASH, which provides an opportunity for staff, parents, grandparents, alumni, and community members to network in a social setting and to strengthen relationships. Additionally, school/family dinner nights at local restaurants each month and the school fall carnival provide fellowship for adults and children. The consistent and generous support from school families and the community continues to raise necessary funds which assist in the school operations.

While fellowship is vital to the community, it is service that keeps the focus on the gospel values.

Students and families actively participate in social justice programs by contributing time, talent, and treasure to ministries of the church and community such as the South Alabama Mission Project, First Stop Homeless Outreach, The Ark animal shelter, Baby Basket Project for new, young mothers, the Backpack Meals Project, and St. Vincent de Paul food pantry. These service projects help the recipients directly and offer valuable life-long lessons to the students. In addition to outreach ministry, students are given the opportunity to participate in many community events.

As the community changes and grows, HSRCS recognizes the needs of those within the school. To assist the growing Hispanic community, interpreters attend parent/teacher conferences and translate written communications as needed. Tutoring and enrichment for students with academic needs are offered through the support of the church's St. Vincent de Paul Society and alumni.

HSRCS facilitates communication for all new and returning families beginning with Tiger Night, which is held annually to welcome families and prepare them for the new school year. Communication continues with the school's website and weekly newsletter, *Tiger Talk*, which informs families and the community of current events and news. Every homeroom has either a weekly newsletter or a class planner for informational updates. This year, RenWeb was initiated school-wide to keep parents apprised of student progress in real time and provides staff with the ability to remain accessible. HSRCS recognizes that staying visible within and connected to the community ensures student success and fosters productive, on-going school improvement.

# **PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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## **1. Curriculum:**

HSRCS's curriculum is based on the ALCOS and Diocesan Benchmarks created by the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. These benchmarks elevate the requirements set forth in the state standards and enhance the curriculum. Diocesan committees review and select instructional and supplemental materials that best align with Diocesan Benchmarks. In addition, curriculum meetings are held to address general instructional issues and cross-curricular concerns.

### **Religion:**

Religious education is a top priority at HSRCS and is a part of every classroom every day. Students at each grade level learn and practice the Catholic faith through prayer, sacrament, and service instilling in them a sense of faithful citizenship throughout their lifetime.

### **Technology:**

The technology program is skills based and integrated across the curriculum. All students use current digital learning tools. A variety of resources facilitate technology driven classrooms. The technology curriculum at HSRCS provides a cumulative learning experience that builds at every grade level and produces a capable and confident learner who is prepared for higher education and the working world.

### **Mathematics:**

The development of conceptual understanding occurs through algebraic and problem solving skills, number theory, logical and spatial reasoning, as well as computational fluency. Students gain skills necessary to apply concepts to real world situations. Advanced Mathematics is offered to students beginning in grade 4 culminating in grade 8 with Algebra I.

### **Reading/English Language Arts:**

The Language Arts curriculum develops strong, independent readers, writers, and speakers. With a concentration on grammar, writing, and public speaking, the Language Arts program is a skills driven program that encourages the development of students who are well-rounded communicators and fluent readers.

### **Science:**

The K-5 science program teaches students to question, research, experiment, and assess results that are derived from critical inquiry. In middle school, students are empowered to further develop these skills, allowing them to grasp abstract concepts and apply knowledge in the areas of earth, physical, and life sciences.

### **Social Studies:**

Elementary students learn about their role within a community in local, state, national, and global settings. Middle school students begin study with the advent of civilization and continue study with the discussion of current events. Students are equipped with the knowledge to use problem solving skills in an ever changing world.

## **Physical Education:**

The Physical Education program offers a variety of activities to develop healthy and active students. Daily classes for each grade enable students to experience a well-rounded balance of games, cardiovascular exercises, and lifelong skills.

## **Foreign Language:**

An introductory Spanish language program is taught to all students in grades K-8 to promote learning and appreciation of different cultures and customs. Students gain an understanding of the Spanish language, values, customs and traditions. This foundation encourages students to continue foreign language studies in high school and prepares them for living in a multicultural world. HSRCS is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

## **Visual and Performing Arts:**

Every student has weekly music instruction and exposure to music theory and performance. The St. Cecilia Choir, band, and Spirit Fuel, a performance-based vocal group, are extracurricular offerings open to all students. All students receive instruction in visual arts regularly and learn the elements of art while creating their own artwork.

## **Guidance:**

The guidance program helps each student to reach his or her full potential. All students receive structured lessons every other week on such topics as study skills, career exploration, and personal/social skills. The guidance counselor is also a confidential resource for school families, faculty and staff.

## **2. Reading/English:**

HSRCS's reading curriculum is centered upon the creation of lifelong readers who enjoy challenging and meaningful literature. The faculty strives to meet the needs of each student through a differentiated and integrated curriculum.

In grades K-5, the Scott Foresman Reading Street© 2008 program is used as a guide to facilitate phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension through skills integration. Grammar and writing skills are combined with research, public speaking, and listening skills, which help students excel in Language Arts. Students are introduced to a variety of genres that extend to content areas such as social studies and science.

Classroom instruction is differentiated using decodable readers, small group instruction, leveled readers, and a variety of computer applications. The Accelerated Reader™ and Star Reading™ programs are also used to supplement the curriculum. Struggling readers receive strategic intervention in the resource classroom. In addition, St. Vincent de Paul volunteers work with students at individual skill levels. Students are assessed weekly and complete benchmark tests at the end of every unit to identify strengths and weaknesses.

The focus on comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary skills are continued into the middle school levels. In grades 6 through 8, multiple strategies are implemented to ensure student success. Texts are used to bolster skills, not only in comprehension, but also in the understanding and use of literary elements and devices. Vocabulary is incorporated both through literature and spelling programs. Essay writing requires students to think critically and provide text evidences to support a thesis. The emphasis that is placed on reading and writing involves not only the Language Arts classrooms but also the content areas of math, social studies, and science.

Reading a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction, allows students to experience multiple genres. Through recitation, research, presentation, peer-led reviews, discussion formats such as Socratic circles, and oral evaluations of writing, students put reading skills to use. Students are expected to develop a skill set that will prepare them for high school by the end of eighth grade. Students who have proven themselves capable are eligible for Advanced Literature in eighth grade.

HSRCS teachers share a love of literature and writing and all students enjoy reading individually and in group settings throughout the day. HSRCS students may choose books from extensive school and classroom libraries, and book fairs, in order to foster a lifelong love of reading.

### **3. Mathematics:**

High expectations are the foundation of the Mathematics curriculum at HSRCS. Student success in the K-8 Mathematics program is a direct result of an enriched curriculum taught by competent, enthusiastic, and passionate teachers. The current ALCOS and Diocesan Benchmarks, with integration of CCSS, drive the curriculum and determine math textbook selection. Grade-level curriculum meetings are routinely held to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with one another and discuss best practices, share ideas, and maintain cohesiveness. The faculty was instrumental in the process of enriching the ALCOS to create the Diocesan Benchmarks, which elevate the expectations and performance for students across the diocese. The school maintains a constant focus on the highest possible standards to prepare and motivate students in seeking real world interests and careers in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Grade level math classes have a teacher-student ratio that allows for better differentiation and one-to-one reinforcement with students who struggle with particular curriculum concepts. When needed, small group instruction is available in the resource classroom. St. Vincent de Paul tutors provide individual assistance in learning math facts. Additional math enrichment is offered through Math Team, which meets weekly to prepare participants in grades 5 through 8 for in-school and online competitions throughout the state of Alabama. Advanced Mathematics is offered to eligible students beginning in the fourth grade, which leads to high school level Algebra for eighth graders. Advanced Math is designed to meet the needs and interests of students who are above grade level.

A variety of supplemental materials, including interactive Promethean whiteboards and online videos, is integrated to teach curriculum concepts. Manipulatives, interactive white boards, and student led teaching are some of the methods used in every classroom to provide for differentiation. Enrichment takes place throughout the school, beginning with algebraic reasoning at the kindergarten level. Online access to all math textbooks provides opportunities for students and parents to work together and utilize the extra resources. Simple Solutions is a supplemental program used to heighten computation skills as well as strengthen and reinforce past, present, and future curriculum concepts.

Through differentiation and technologically rich resources, teachers work to continually improve the overall academic experience for all students, thus meeting the objectives of the Mathematics program at HSRCS.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The mission of HSRCS is to provide an education strongly rooted in Catholic values, reflecting each student's unique qualities, and promoting excellence in the whole person. HSRCS commits to creating an environment that fosters faith-filled individuals as they discover and utilize their gifts and talents through academic success and service to others. The students best demonstrate this through the visual and performing arts of the liturgy during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. These liturgical celebrations are entirely student led.

Student led liturgies celebrate Catholic identity, take place weekly, and afford each class the responsibility to serve as lectors, altar servers, cantors, musicians, actors, gift bearers, and sacristans. Students as young as kindergarten read from the Bible, giving clear witness to God's Word and to others, fostering a love for scripture, building self-confidence, and developing public speaking and reading skills. Students perform dramatizations of scripture or of the life of a saint, allowing them to share unique talents and bring the gospels to life. Furthermore, these performances provide authentic examples of how to live as disciples of Christ.

In addition, the school's music ministry provides a spiritually moving experience of God's presence and is an integral part of worship. Students, themselves, select music appropriate to the liturgy. As cantors and musicians, they lead the entire school community through prayerful, musical devotion to Christ. Throughout this process, they learn a spirit of cooperation and harmony, which allows them to witness their faith to others in a unique way.

Invaluable life skills such as responsibility, leadership, and dedication of purpose are cultivated in each individual child and are meant to help students grasp the skills and values that will become assets for them throughout the duration of their academic lives and beyond.

Led by one of the priests, parents and the parish community come together to support the children and join in a spiritually uplifting celebration of faith and tradition that will provide lasting memories and foster a lifelong love and understanding of the Catholic faith.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

HSRCS strives to maximize learning across every grade level according to each individual student's potential. The faculty shares the vision that each student possesses unique qualities, which can be shaped and developed through a dynamic and fluid curriculum. The basis of the curriculum is the ALCOS, strengthened by the Diocesan Benchmarks with consideration toward CCSS.

Through the use of data driven and research based strategies, teachers are able to implement effective lesson plans that actively engage the students in the acquisition of vital skills. Curriculum is implemented using a cross-curricular approach, which exposes the students to multiple subjects during the day.

Teachers deliver explicit whole group and small group instruction along with one-to-one interventions as needed. Students are given opportunities to actively participate in classroom instruction through authentic, hands-on, inquiry and project based learning. Assessments include, but are not limited to, objective skills based testing, rubric based projects, and observational assessments. Systematic assessments, both formative and summative, are frequently used to establish the retention of skills.

Differentiation is the watch word for instruction at HSRCS, so as to allow students to develop a deeper, richer understanding of not only content but also the skills that are required to formulate logical reasoning and to express ideas convincingly. Consequently, the curriculum has a strong emphasis on writing and a focus on reading critically using text, novels, and informational literature.

Technology is also a crucial resource in classrooms. HSRCS is blessed with an enriched environment which provides each classroom an interactive Promethean board, laptop or desktop computers, and LCD projectors. Classrooms also have availability to learner response systems such as ActiVotes, ActiExpressions, ActiSlates, and the use of a mobile iPad® tablet cart. Instructional methods incorporate these resources, allowing for further differentiation that enables students to demonstrate mastery over the content.

HSRCS continually strives to meet the needs of all of its learners, including the English language learner population, students with special needs, and students from varying socioeconomic statuses. Additionally,

courses are offered for academically advanced students in grades 4 through 8 for math and in grade 8 for literature.

Classroom teachers collaboratively plan across grade levels to ensure the inclusion of all academic abilities with the philosophy that every child can learn with teachers who care. HSRCS is committed to research and to implement new and effective strategies that will strengthen the vision and make it an ongoing reality.

## **6. Professional Development:**

The HSRCS administration provides the resources and encouragement for teachers to pursue professional growth and development. Currently, 24% of the faculty possess advanced degrees. Teacher-driven selections directly relate to academic standards within disciplines and equip the faculty with strategies for the classroom. Webinars and online courses, based on professionally sound practices, are recommended because of their diversity and flexibility. While teachers use professional development opportunities to improve effectiveness and student achievement, these experiences also contribute to teacher recertification requirements for the state of Alabama.

When possible, HSRCS allocates funds for teachers to attend national conferences such as National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), The National Conference on Girl Bullying and Relational Aggression, and the National Kindergarten Teacher's Conference. In 2011, the school calendar was modified to enable the faculty to attend the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) convention in New Orleans with funded transportation and lodging. Additionally, the diocese hosts two annual in-services. One day includes a keynote address by a prominent professional and is focused on current best practices and educational trends. The second in-service highlights the faith of educators and administrators and their ability to share that faith with the community and students they serve. Both days connect teachers across the diocese with colleagues and offer a forum for collaboration that continues beyond the in-service experience.

In June 2012, a group of HSRCS faculty attended the National Leadership Forum and was inspired to implement a program to foster leadership among faculty and students. With shared experiences and common language, the faculty has become more unified. Subsequently, teachers and students are growing in leadership roles throughout the school.

Teachers are regularly encouraged to seek out individual opportunities for professional development, and HSRCS is dedicated to the pursuit of training and education in the area of technologically rich, differentiated instruction. Training related to the newly adopted reading and math series has enabled teachers to efficiently employ available resources that align to current standards and Diocesan Benchmarks. As a result, lessons are more engaging and students take a more active role in the learning process.

## **7. School Leadership:**

HSRCS falls under the governance of the Bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama, and his appointed superintendent. At the local level, the principal is hired by and serves the pastors of both Holy Spirit and Good Shepherd churches.

HSRCS has an appointed school board, which is advisory to both the principal and the pastors. The school board's responsibility includes managing school finances, creating school policy, and marketing the school. School leadership, which includes the bishop, pastors, principal, and school board, works collaboratively to create a learning environment in which students can thrive not only academically, but also spiritually.

The principal is the academic and spiritual leader of HSRCS. He leads the daily operations of the school and is mandated to adhere to all state, local, and diocesan policies. The principal is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, supervising, and evaluating all faculty and staff members. Additionally, he provides faculty and staff with opportunities for professional growth and maintains the school's vision.

The SLT, appointed by the principal and made up of faculty, staff, and stakeholders, is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that HSRCS is in compliance with accreditation standards imposed by SACS CASI. The role of the SLT is to prepare and organize the school's faculty and staff to work in amending and updating the annual School Improvement Plan. The team meets regularly to initiate, review, and critique actions implemented. The SLT plays a critical role in evaluating the school's effectiveness and student performance.

In appropriate instances, the principal appoints faculty to lead committees. For example, the Care Team assists struggling students by helping teachers and parents develop a plan to ensure success for each student. The Technology Committee develops, designs, and implements plans that promote students' fluency with 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom skills, digital citizenship awareness, and the ability to thrive in future experiences. The Uniform Committee maintains dress code standards and recommends policy changes. The goal of the Student Behavior Committee is to assist students in developing healthy peer relationships. There are various other faculty led committees that focus on particular curricula and student achievement.

In 2012, initiated by faculty after a workshop experience at the National Leadership Forum in Atlanta, GA, the Growing as Leaders Committee was formed to provide leadership training to faculty, who can then model leadership skills in the classroom.

## **PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM**

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1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2012-2013 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<b>K</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>5th</b>
<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>
<b>6th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>11th</b>
<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$4341</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>12th</b>	<b>Other</b>				
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$4630

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2355

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?  
7%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 13%

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/2011

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	78	78	80	79	78
Number of students tested	49	38	45	43	54
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

13PV58

## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/20111

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	76	81	77	82	84
Number of students tested	49	38	45	43	54
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

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## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/2011

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	73	84	81	75	80
Number of students tested	43	48	52	43	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

13PV58

## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/2011

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	73	86	86	86	84
Number of students tested	55	48	52	43	48
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

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## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/2011

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	72	81	81	62	78
Number of students tested	55	56	51	46	46
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

13PV58

## NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Assessments

Edition/Publication Year:  
2000/2011

Publisher:  
RIVERSIDE

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	81	81	81	75	84
Number of students tested	43	56	51	46	46
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Updated norms were used in 2011-2012.					

13PV58