

U.S. Department of Education
2016 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 Florence B. Swanson

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

Official School Name St. Mary's Academy Lower School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4545 South University Drive

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

City Englewood State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80113-6059

County Arapahoe

Telephone (303) 762-8300 Fax (303) 783-6201

Web site/URL http://www.smanet.org E-mail fswanson@stmarys.academy

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/St-

Twitter Handle

Marys-Academy-Englewood-CO-

https://twitter.com/stmarysacdm 109026309139016/ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Deirdre Cryor E-mail dcryor@stmarys.academy

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

District Name St. Mary's Academy Tel. (303) 762-8300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Bob Flynn

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

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

Date _____

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any 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.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	8	11	8
K	8	15	23
1	13	13	26
2	16	17	33
3	13	19	32
4	15	23	38
5	8	32	40
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	81	130	211

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73 % White
 - 0 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	202
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.030
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

As a private school, we do not identify students as ELL. We have students who speak other languages at home and also students who did not learn English as their first language.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
 Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %
0 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <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 |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	15
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **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 2015.

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%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1998

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

SMA fosters excellence through academic achievement, spiritual development and service. The Loretto Values of faith, community, justice and respect provide the structure for our success.

PART III – SUMMARY

The story of St. Mary's Academy Lower School (SMA) began 150 years ago when a key necessity was missing in the Colorado territory: education for frontier children. In 1864, three courageous Sisters of Loretto traveled to Denver by coach to open St. Mary's Academy (SMA). The first high school graduate in Colorado was SMA's Jessie Forshee in 1875, a year before Colorado received its statehood. The four Loretto School Values of faith, community, justice and respect are the touchstone of all we do.

Currently, St. Mary's Academy is a premier Catholic independent school, offering a co-ed program from (JK) Junior Kindergarten through 8th grade, and an all girls' high school. The JK-5 Lower School is applying for a Blue Ribbon Award.

Our Lower School includes 214 students in JK-5th grade, serving students from over 70 zip codes. The student body is comprised of a diverse cultural and ethnic population and includes students from all over the world. In fact, the student population boasts over 30 percent diversity, one of the highest percentages among independent schools in Colorado. SMA values and includes all members of society and has a generous tuition assistance program to encourage this diversity. The opportunities provided by the students who attend SMA include parent support and children who come to school ready to learn. SMA Lower School was a previous 1998 Blue Ribbon school under the leadership of a Sister of Loretto. Since then, SMA has strived to continue a tradition of excellence, although has not leveraged the award due to so many years passing since receiving it.

The Lower School at St. Mary's Academy helps students thrive in all aspects of their lives, including academically, emotionally, culturally, physically and socially, through rich programming and individual focus on each student's needs. In the past years, the SMA staff has focused on initiatives to assess, review and to assure delivery in bringing the best possible education to students. Those initiatives included adopting a new math curriculum, piloting a new writing workshop model, focusing on ways boys learn best, improving the school day experience and schedule, and focusing on creating a vibrant STREAM integration. (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math). Reflection and growth is a key strategy that St. Mary's Academy has valued over the 150-year history of the school!

The day begins with families bringing their children to school, and most parents come into the classrooms for the first 20 minutes before the bell rings. During this time teachers and parents talk about the students, share personal information, and are part of the morning routine. New parents have a chance to talk with other parents and are pulled right into the welcoming school culture. The halls are truly bustling with the sound of kids, parents and staff exemplifying what community really means. The principal greets students who are dropped off in their car every single morning, along with the trusty Service Patrol students who assist the younger students with coats, backpacks and a smile. The younger children can't wait to pop out of their cars to hug an older student and be escorted to their room. The positive social and emotional aspects of the morning routine set the standard for the entire day.

SMA's Lower School academic philosophy is to meet the needs of our students and help them achieve academic excellence. A key strategy for academic success is to discuss and find creative ways to help students achieve. Students who are achieving above the standards are given more "thinking" work instead of more worksheets or moving ahead. Critical thinking, writing, and technology applications are all available as students are challenged to be deep thinkers.

Growing leaders has been a key focus in the last few years. Teacher leaders meet to discuss how to lead teams, facilitate decisions and appreciate different styles of our co-workers. Students can join the student leadership group, which promotes service to the school through spirit days, service projects, and learning to become ambassadors of peace. A project this year from the student leaders is to create emergency lockdown buckets with supplies for each classroom.

After much discussion and a yearlong study of how boys learn, SMA offers Physical Education (PE) every day of the week! Daily PE was a result of the commitment to students' health and happiness. Teachers also

purposefully integrate movement into all lesson plans.

Assemblies for all stakeholders are a unique tradition implemented to bring the school community together and to foster social, emotional and cultural appreciation. Each month a service project is chosen and presented at the assembly. Past recipients include an orphanage in Haiti (where one of our students was adopted) and a coat drive for the homeless. Students are drawn into the community and world through service.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The English Language Arts curriculum incorporates all components of a balanced literacy program: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency. The Colorado State Standards serve as guide for instruction at each grade level. Differentiated instruction in small group settings ensures that each child is achieving success. Content is presented in whole group direct instruction, small guided groups and meaningful student independent practice, as in the Daily Five, which provides students a format of using independent time. Students learn to self-manage and engage and are held accountable for reading, writing and word study while the teacher is working with small groups with similar needs.

Words their Way is a developmental approach to phonics, spelling and vocabulary, that begins in Junior Kindergarten (JK). In JK, students sing, chant and categorize words and letters to provide the scaffold to kindergarten readiness. Students study word patterns, parts and derivational meanings. Teachers begin with a formative spelling inventory assessment to analyze student errors and pinpoint exactly where individual instruction should begin. Following the gradual release model, teachers model and provide explicit explanations about word patterns. Students are then assigned groups of words to sort in relation to a spelling pattern. Through continued use of this program, teachers have learned about how students progress through the different stages and phases of spelling development.

This year teachers are piloting a new format for writing instruction. The Lucy Calkins program provides units of study for students to learn informational, persuasive and narrative writing. The workshop format beginning daily in JK, gives students choice about what they write, while holding them accountable for incorporating writing strategies taught during the mini-lesson. The workshop format allows teachers to conference with individuals and small groups to provide targeted instruction. Students share their work frequently and even the youngest writers consider themselves “authors” and know they have valuable stories to communicate.

The Saxon Math program is a researched based, common core aligned, comprehensive program, chosen to provide students with an incremental structure that distributes content throughout the year with frequent review and assessment. Foundational skills including number sense, operations, fact fluency, measurement and mathematical reasoning are acquired through whole group instruction and individual independent practice. As a result of this new program, 95% of the students are achieving 80% or above on assessments. In grades 3-5, students who are excelling have moved to the next grade level materials, which have allowed focus on remediation for some, and acceleration for others. Our JK uses Building Blocks, a hands on developmentally appropriate program that provides whole group instruction, centers and exploration. Building Blocks provides the bridge for students to become successful when entering kindergarten.

SMA follows the Next Generation Science Standards. Units from Life Science, Earth Science and Physical Science as well as Technology and Engineering are integrated into each strand or unit. The staff collaborated to align the science units in each strand to provide a foundation for students without repetition of units.

Teachers utilize many resources to meet the standards including commercial kits, online lesson and videos. Students are doing science, not just learning science. Evidence of their learning and thinking are kept in science journals and logs. Students participate and are actively exploring and following inquiry designed lessons to bring the standards to life, including use of the Scientific Method when designing experiments.

One collaborative unit has been a STEM unit on coding. Our 4-5 students practiced coding online as well as unplugged activities, and then created codes and followed commands for a cup-stacking configuration. While building, they “de-bugged” the codes and wrote reviews of online coding programs. This collaboration includes the science teacher and our instructional specialist, with input from the PE teacher and technology teacher.

Our Social Studies and History program follows the Colorado State Standards and includes history, geography, economics, government, citizenship, and culture. Field trips to the Fire Station, local museums and guest speakers bring the learning to life. In grades 3-5 students read a weekly magazine (Scholastic News) providing a weekly current event format for discussion and instruction aligned to the standards. Plays and performances highlight social studies and historical knowledge, and help bring them to life for our students.

Core Curriculum Preschool (Junior Kindergarten) JK

SMA offers a Junior Kindergarten program that provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences in the following areas; Social-Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Scientific Exploration, Social Studies, Physical Development and the Arts. As previously described, the JK program has adopted practices and programs that align with and lead into the Lower School curriculum.

The JK program has had a positive impact on kindergarten readiness. Nearly 90% of students coming from our JK enter kindergarten knowing all of their letters and sounds. As a result, the JK program has grown in the last two years.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All Junior Kindergarten (JK) through fifth grade students attend Art, Music, Spanish and Technology as week long rotations through the year. All students attend Library classes once a week, and every student attends PE class every day.

Music

In music classes, students play rhythm instruments and recorders, sing, create and write music, and respond and learn about how music relates to other cultures and the world around them. We use the Quaver General Music Curriculum Program, which is a comprehensive, customizable, digital program based on the National Music Education Standards of Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting. Students frequently perform for multiple audiences.

Optional band, orchestra and private lessons in piano and guitar as well as an after-school Drama Club and Choir Club provide other music opportunities for students.

Art

The Art curriculum is built upon the Colorado Academic Visual Arts Standards. The Art teacher is a working artist, showing her own work in Denver galleries. Students learn to observe, invent, create and connect knowledge with art and design.

Media include collage, sculpture, ceramics, painting and fibers. A recent project allowed the use of i-movie technology on i-pads. Students integrated tint projects and film techniques to create a project.

Each grade level has unifying art themes. This year the Art teacher started with a gratitude project. Each student and staff member used scratch boards and an item from nature to produce a wonderful wall display.

Technology

SMA's Technology teacher, a member of the American Association of School Librarians and the National Committee for Best Apps for Teaching and Learning, collaborates with each teacher to personalize technology instruction for students. Students learn to navigate the Internet safely and become responsible Digital Citizens. Students create tools, plan projects, code, and synthesize data. Grade level learning is reflected and enhanced with projects to support grade level standards. Students also receive typing instruction.

Foreign Language

SMA's Spanish teacher graduated in Chile and is a native speaker. Beginning in JK, students participate in conversational Spanish that incorporates song, dance, art and literature. As proficiency increases, students

learn reading, writing and language skills. Students develop insight into the nature of the language through celebrations of Spanish customs with food and dance. Parents are encouraged to learn Spanish along with their children as the Spanish teacher provides a website with lessons and extensions to do at home.

Library

The librarian, who reviews children's literature for the Professional Journal School Librarian Connection, exposes students to a wide variety of literature. Students learn a variety of skills including assessing, interpreting and applying information from print and non-print materials. The Librarian models his love of reading and introduces students to the world of non-fiction literature. Books in the library are not leveled, and students are not pressured to read certain books, as the philosophy is one that children will naturally love reading when provided the right books and the right attitude toward reading. Classroom teachers work closely with the librarian to guide students toward appropriate reading materials.

Religion and Values

All students participate in daily Morning Prayer, and receive weekly religion lessons. Religion and value lessons follow the liturgical year, and are guided by local diocese standards. Students learn Bible Stories, learn about Saints and observe Advent and Lent. Students in all grades attend five Lower School Masses and older students participate as readers and acolytes. An All-Academy Mass is celebrated by all school divisions in April. In May, each division honors Mary, the Mother of Jesus, with a May Crowning Event. Holy Thursday is also celebrated by the entire academy. It includes a Mass and foot washing service. Local priests from our community join us to lead these events.

PE

The PE teachers provide instruction in games, gymnastics, and dance. The curriculum follows the Colorado State Standards, Spark Standards as well as the SHAPE AMERICA's National PE Standards. Our students are able to demonstrate competency and confidence in a variety of game skills, in addition to motor skill development and movement patterns in game situations. Units include tennis, field hockey, soccer, and volleyball. The PE program incorporates Creative Dance for all boys and girls as an expression of an idea.

In April, students celebrate healthy choices with a Health Fair. Parent and community volunteers, such as medical professionals and athletes, give presentations about making healthy choices. Students participate in new sports, such as fencing. The goal is to have fitness be a lifestyle that continues into adulthood.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Effective instructional methods are key to student achievement. The staff uses multiple instructional approaches to meet the needs of students. If students aren't learning, our staff reviews their own instructional methods. Teachers make deliberate plans, but flexibly adapt and adjust them to ensure that all children are learning.

Classroom teachers provide both whole and small group instruction on a daily basis. Whole group instruction focuses on grade-level content and smaller groups are utilized to re-teach, clarify, or expand upon the lesson. Formative assessments and teacher observations further inform teachers about the need for enrichment and remediation. Teachers purposefully form small groups to provide more intensive and deliberate guided instruction aimed at meeting individual students' needs.

Differentiation looks different at each grade level, but a common practice is to group students according to skill or ability. At all grade levels throughout the school, teachers individualize instruction to meet the needs of all students in reading, writing and math. Our intermediate teachers focus on one content area, and work together to integrate learning. This allows teachers to slow down instruction and spend more time presenting concepts in a variety of ways. All of our intermediate grades have at least one group of students working one grade level above in math. Primary teachers have designated a skilled teacher to work with the lowest performing readers to provide systematic phonics and reading instruction on a daily basis.

The use of thinking stems, graphic organizers, teacher modeling and think-alouds make learning concrete

for students. Using the gradual release model, our teachers thoughtfully deliver direct instruction to the class and plan ample opportunities for shared exploration and practice before requiring students to demonstrate individual mastery (I do, we do, you do).

During their planning periods, teachers are engaged in discussion about best practices, observations, assessment, supplementary materials, and are comparing notes on student performance across the day in all subject areas. This year a new position of Instructional Specialist was added to provide Tier 3 support to primary students reading well below grade level benchmark. This position has also elevated the capacity for providing job-embedded coaching and professional development for the staff.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Assessment and discussion of student learning has been the cornerstone of the year. Assessments are used to track progress and guide instructional decisions. A monthly schedule was designed to systematically assess students in literacy and math throughout the year. Each year intermediate students take the Terra Nova test. Thoughtful care ensures that over testing of students does not occur.

Literacy assessments include a diagnostic reading assessment twice a year. Teachers administer running records and fluency assessments on a monthly basis. In addition, a phonics-screening tool is used in the primary grades. Vocabulary study includes weekly tests, and the basal reading program assesses each skill set taught within the story.

The math program begins with an assessment that has allowed placement of students at different levels. Each week a small assessment is embedded in the program, and there are also unit tests. Teachers track missed problems and are able to see what concepts they need to re-teach and review with small groups.

Analyzing assessment results is a process that includes all staff members in small and large groups. The staff reviews student work, makes instructional shifts and talks about the best ways to maintain high levels of achievement.

For example, at a recent staff meeting teachers brought student writing samples. In mixed grade level groups, including special areas, the staff analyzed the areas of strength and weakness for each sample. The group noticed students needed more scaffolding and decided to start using transition words as early as kindergarten with oral story telling. Additionally, the staff noticed that handwriting was not meeting our expectations. Further meetings were held, and the staff came to consensus to use similar instructional language and a common verbal path to teach handwriting in grades K-2. Staff agreed that students should be held to a high standard and that teachers need to give regular instruction and reminders in handwriting.

Assessment results are shared with stakeholders in several ways. Weekly Friday folders contain all graded work, so that parents have frequent updates on progress. Scheduled conferences are held twice a year, and teachers take this opportunity to provide and explain specific information. The staff ensures that parents understand the educational terms and vocabulary shared with them. For example, the instructional specialist made a short video about the intervention program so that parents understood materials and at home activities.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

SMA takes pride in its rich history and inviting culture. The four Loretto Values - Faith, Community, Justice and Respect, are at the heart of who we are. SMA serves and nurtures the whole child. While a rigorous academic program is offered to families, students' social, emotional and physical development is equally as important. The entire school community benefits from a positive climate and the SMA staff works diligently to cultivate and maintain the sense of community that permeates the school.

One long-standing tradition is a weekly assembly. At assemblies, students showcase their learning and talents. Often, grade level teams will present for the rest of the school. Their performance might include a creative presentation about social studies or science, a band or orchestra concert, a dance or fitness program taught by PE staff, or a video promoting a service project. Students also receive awards and certificates at assemblies, including those earned outside of school. The staff is mindful about celebrating every person in the building. Students are motivated to be on stage and because of it are confident public speakers and performers.

Parents and teachers work together to provide enrichment opportunities for students. Many devote countless hours to Destination Imagination (DI). Students are challenged to problem solve, build, and work collaboratively within a team on presented challenges. Two years ago, one team took first place in the DI Global Competition. Last year three teams placed in the top twelve. Engineering concepts are woven into every DI challenge.

After school programs offered to students include: Scratch Lab, Tae Kwon Do, Ballet, Science Matters, Lego Club, Service Patrol and the School Newspaper. Students can also take private guitar lessons during the day, join orchestra and band and even audition for a school-wide play.

Teachers are provided with many opportunities for collaboration. Faculty meetings, team meetings and late start days are used to share personal celebrations and successes in the classroom, and to discuss student growth and challenges. SMA also provides opportunities for teachers to build friendships with one another. The Sunshine Committee organizes monthly birthday lunches for teachers while parent volunteers cover lunch and recess duty. A teacher leadership team and initiative teams have been created to elicit teacher opinions and ideas. All teachers are experts in their field. Their knowledge is valued and the staff listens to every voice.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Loretto School Value of community brings a strong sense of support from stakeholders and the local community as a valued part of St. Mary's Academy. The focus of these efforts supports students academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

We foster a close relationship with the local police department. The school resource officer is here almost daily, walking the halls, talking with students at lunch, and attending special events as an honored guest. Kindergarten students walk to the fire department nearby and fourth graders serve as historical docents at the history museum. Each grade level reaches into the community to teach students the importance of those connections.

Service to others is an important part of SMA. Not only does SMA support charities with monthly collections, but also the students choose those recipients. The personal connections that families have with different charities bring meaning to the donations. Students recently gave snack items to a non-profit that provides support for families in grief. This organization was founded by one of our own parents. The Sisters of Loretto have a mission school in Pakistan and will lead a school supply drive so we can connect with students and teachers across the world. Starting in January, we will be participating with Sisters of

Loretto worldwide to pray for peace in our world on the first Monday of each month. These connections to other people, near and far, prepare students to be global citizens.

The connection to families is an important focus at SMA. Events such as “Moms’ Night Out” and a new “Dads’ Club” gathering are organized. These events are purposeful with the goal of getting to know each other, having fun together, and becoming a school family. Family events such as a Fall Festival, Bingo Night, Halloween Parade, Field Day, the Health Fair and school Masses are just a few more ways that we include parents into our day.

In the Spirit of Loretto, our school also works with other local schools and pre-schools to collaborate and share information, although we are competitors. SMA allows for private music teachers, tutors and other professionals to come to the school and work with students, as SMA is committed to student achievement in all areas.

3. Professional Development:

Using the standards and research on best practices, SMA provides professional development (PD) to the staff on a regular basis. Twice a month, all staff attends a 90-minute PD in-service. The plan strategically encompasses the entire year so that we provide multiple opportunities to review, reflect and implement the best instruction for students. The impact of this ongoing training for the staff promotes knowledge of best practices in instruction and has increased minutes of academic instruction during the school day. Assessment results showing student growth in Saxon Math and in the DRA (Diagnostic Reading Assessment), are the result of PD efforts.

Additionally, time is spent at staff meetings looking at student work samples to guide conversations and instructional focus. The impact of this time for cross grade level discussion has led to consistency in instructional strategies and vocabulary of learning amongst staff and students. This year, SMA has scheduled common prep times for teachers. At these smaller meetings, the principal, with the counselor and instructional specialist attending, keeps the focus on remediation, acceleration and implementation of program expectations. The principal has supported the staff with PD days during the year. This summer, a day of PD was provided by the Saxon Math Company, which sets us on a path for success with this program.

With a new math program, new word study/spelling program, a piloted writing program and a re-focus on phonics, providing support to teachers has been a key focus and challenge this year. On every level, teachers are provided support. The instructional coach has begun coaching cycles with teachers to provide one-on-one modeling and collaboration, the specials teachers are supporting the STREAM integration initiatives, and we are working as a team to assess and instruct all students. Every student is “our student” and this attitude has expanded due to the time we are spending reflecting on what is taught and how it is taught. The committees, each led by a staff member, include math, literacy, school day experience/schedules, technology, and boy-friendly strategies, have one focused objective this year: to support our students. The committee leaders lead the PD for their area. The impact of having the staff lead the PD reflects the depth of knowledge and commitment among SMA’s teacher leaders. Relentless would be the word to describe the commitment to the SMA program, and enthusiastic would be the word to describe the teachers.

4. School Leadership:

St. Mary’s Academy is an independent Catholic School, and is under the governance of our Board of Directors. The President of SMA is responsible for the Lower School, Middle School and the High School, all of which are located on campus. SMA belongs to the Association for Colorado Independent Schools, and SMA collaborates with other schools within the association.

The SMA principal is a school leader with the experience and knowledge to guide the school focus on

student achievement. The principal is responsible for interviewing, hiring, supervising and evaluating all faculty and staff members. The principal is also a key contributor to the admissions process and is directly involved with all school tours, admission events, visiting local pre-schools and other recruiting events.

The principal fosters collaboration between all stakeholders in St. Mary's Academy including students, staff, parents, school administrators, the Security Team, the Admissions team, the Board of Directors and the public. Communication with all leaders promotes a positive culture of high expectations along with the encouragement and support necessary to achieve success.

The Academy Parent support group meets with the principal monthly and they work closely together on everything from academic achievement information to social and emotional support for both students and parents. Many events are planned to support the school culture.

There are many layers of committees focused on improving student achievement. Last year, ten committees were formed with teacher leaders to address literacy and math, instructional practices and a focus on learning styles of boys, improving the schedule to provide cross grade level communication and school leadership. The committees continue this year. The principal puts conversations about achievement at the forefront of every decision. The principal is committed to growing the leaders with skills such as building group norms, facilitative leadership, addressing adult learning styles, and building morale as the staff embraces the changes.

The school counselor supports leadership and student learning by attending all grade level team meetings, faculty meetings and maintaining communication with parents.

A group of grade level chairs has been established to give input and ideas to build school wide consensus shared at each grade level.

A student council group has been added with the third through fifth grade students, as leadership is not limited to adults at SMA. At the student council meetings, the principal teaches leadership skills, works on service projects for our school, and has students make decisions that positively affect the school culture, such as spirit days.

PART VI * INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCESS

Faith. Community. Justice. Respect.

The Loretto School Values permeate everything accomplished in the Lower School at St. Mary's Academy and are the most influential factors to success. Visitors often say they can feel the special spirit of the school. From the courageous sisters of Loretto who made the arduous journey over 150 years ago, to this very day, we focus on students and helping them achieve success in all areas of their lives. This includes academic success with a rigorous curriculum and emotional success supported with music, service to others and a love of St. Mary's Academy. The sincerity of the love that the entire staff feels for the students and families allows for success and for failure.

Faith.

Faith deeply affects the attitudes about learning at St. Mary's Academy. When walking into classrooms, students and teachers are discussing the attitudes of learning and how faith can strengthen resolve, perseverance and confidence as students are challenged. Students are tapping into their faith to support their learning on a daily basis.

Community.

The Community of St. Mary's Academy stands behind students as they grow. The deep love for SMA is exemplified by how many alumnae return to our school. In the Lower School, one teacher at each grade level graduated from St. Mary's Academy. Currently, the Art and Spanish teachers are working with students who need help with memorization by using art mediums, songs, and even a second language to reach a different part of their brain. When students have struggled in upper grades, the PE coach has taken the time to set up a regular time to support the students emotionally. It is a common occurrence to attend a class where a 13 year old Middle School mentoring volunteer is sitting at a table with 1st graders guiding them to do their best, try something harder or take a chance.

Justice. Respect.

When reflecting on academic success, the Loretto School Values of Justice and Respect affect the attitudes we expect from students as they learn. Students are taught personal responsibility setting their own standards for excellence. Students who value themselves and their unique pindividuality also value learning as a way to fulfill themselves. Students arrive each day wearing a uniform, and the uniform signifies that they are at school for a purpose. Academic achievement and becoming lifelong learners and members of the global society are the goal.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

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 No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$20038
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$10283

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 14%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 18%

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	658.2
Number of students tested	28
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	653
Number of students tested	31
Percent of total students tested	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	677
Number of students tested	47
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>3</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	658.5
Number of students tested	28
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>4</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	672.3
Number of students tested	32
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>Terranova, third edition</u>
Grade: <u>5</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2008</u>
Publisher: <u>McGraw Hill</u>	Scores are reported here as: <u>Scaled scores</u>

School Year	2014-2015
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	682.8
Number of students tested	47
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: