

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Ruth Ann Palmer

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

Official School Name Savannah Christian Preparatory Lower School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1599 Chatham Parkway PO Box 2848

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

City Savannah State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 31402-2848

County Chatham

Telephone (912) 721-2140 Fax (912) 234-0491

Web site/URL http://www.savcps.com E-mail lowerschool@savcps.com

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Chris Harmon E-mail charmon@savcps.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Savannah Christian Preparatory School District Tel. (912) 234-1653

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. William Daniel Jr.  
(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

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1. 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. 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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	27	24	51
K	37	29	66
1	28	28	56
2	31	34	65
3	38	33	71
4	30	38	68
5	42	38	80
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
<b>Total Students</b>	233	224	457

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 8 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 73 % White
  - 8 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 5%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	530
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.045
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas): Hindu, Dutch, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Greek, Arabic, Bengali, Telugu, Lithuanian

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%

Total number students who qualify: 15

8. Students receiving special education services: 4%  
18 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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>53</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>14</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
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 19:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2011

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

To develop the whole person to the glory of God

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Founded in 1951, Savannah Christian Preparatory School (SCPS) began with eight residential students, a ministry of the local Union Rescue Mission. Today, it is the largest private school in Chatham County, serving 1173 students, 530 of whom comprise the Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 5 Lower School. The 236 acre main campus is fortuitously located at the intersection of I-16 and Chatham Parkway, just outside Savannah, providing travel convenience for parents who bring their children from eight counties to attend Savannah Christian. A smaller Lower School/Middle School campus is located 12 miles across town. In August 2016 the LS will transition to the main campus, a first step in realizing the vision of one campus. The Middle School will relocate one year later.

Respected in the community for its outstanding academic program, approximately 80% of students in Grades 3-5 achieve Honors recognition quarterly. A non-denominational school, families of varied ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds choose SCPS for their children. It serves single-parent and blue-collar families as well as professional parents. Due to its proximity to Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Stewart, SCPS benefits from a strong military presence. Admissions philosophy is intentionally inclusive, welcoming diversity, providing financial assistance and giving opportunity for those needing learning accommodations to join its high achieving student body.

The mission of SCPS is “To develop the whole person to the glory of God.” A key to the success of Lower School students is the devotion of the instructional team to the success of each child. A second key is effective communication with parents. Teachers meet with parents before the year begins, make positive calls and conference frequently. Another key is having challenging and meaningful curriculum that is within the child’s grasp. Differentiated strategies for teaching engage the child and make content relevant. Using digital reinforcement (computer, iPad, Chromebook) to customize instruction is commonplace at SCPS. Lastly, a key to the success of children with special needs is the Learning Resource Center, where they receive 45 minutes of specialized, small group instruction daily in Reading and/or Math.

Teachers have found that extraordinary growth and a desire to succeed occur when children are given meaningful instruction and encouragement. SCPS teachers have a “pro-student bias” that does not stop at the end of the school day. Support is given by teachers, staff and administrators to make possible children’s optimum growth. The bottom line for decisions made by the Lower School is, what is best for the child outweighs all other considerations.

Equally important to a child’s well-being is his/her emotional and social growth. The counselor, parents and administrators partner to provide emotional support and social guidance. One-on-one counseling, small group and classroom guidance provide assistance to children experiencing this type of need.

Pro-social behavior is both taught and caught at SCPS. Daily Bible lessons emphasize foundational principles, teachings with lifelong implications. The Barnabas Award is given in schoolwide assemblies to children who exemplify the monthly character trait, such as being compassionate, diligent or trustworthy. As a result of these experiences, disciplinary problems are very rare in the Lower School.

SCPS has changed in countless ways since 2011!

The 2011 Blue Ribbon School recognition brought ecstatic enthusiasm from parents and well-deserved affirmation to teachers! Parent volunteer hours now exceed expectations. Local professionals often speak to classes and businesses support the school. Children continue to proudly wear their Blue Ribbon tee-shirts for field trips into the community. As measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, student achievement continues to increase. Beginning in Pre-K, children are now given the opportunity to excel beyond grade level in phonics and reading. The Accelerated Reading Program begins in Kindergarten, providing incentive for children to become prolific readers. Accelerated instruction in Math has also become available. Since 2011, an emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) instruction has included a five-day STARBASE program, sponsored by the Department of Defense, the three-day Science/Ecology Camp at St. John’s Island and the adoption of Macmillan’s science textbook

series. Grammar, spelling and vocabulary have become more challenging since the adoption of Sadlier Oxford's language program. Teachers have been given greater participation in professional conferences and in staff development made necessary by the acquisition of SmartBoards, iPads, Chromebooks and 3-D document cameras. Curriculum mapping now spans all subjects and articulation meetings between grade levels have enhanced communication.

High morale among staff, students and parents is confirmed by surveys of those groups in May 2016. SCPS classrooms are happy, productive environments. LS teachers' longevity is one indication of their commitment to SCPS. They have given 337 years to the school, an average of 11 years of service per person. The dedication they give to their children and to Savannah Christian Lower School can best be described by the BP commercial: Excellence "is never being satisfied and always working to be better."

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum in the Lower School provides the foundation upon which all future learning is built. Textbooks are one key to learning and are carefully selected based on whether they meet or exceed national standards and provide depth/challenge. Teachers assist by reviewing the work of multiple publishers.

Reading receives a jump-start in Pre-Kindergarten through first grade using the ABeka phonics and reading curriculum. Letter sounds are learned, they are put together in consonant-vowel-consonant patterns and children are reading before they know it. Phonics patterns continue to be learned in K-1 using charts, songs and games. These patterns transfer to written expression, making possible story writing, journal entries and reports at an early age.

A dual reading program is provided for grades 2 through 5 using novel studies and a basal reading series. Small-group novel study at the child's Lexile level allows him/her to move above grade level. Prolific reading is encouraged by the Reading Counts program, with points accumulated by passing a digital comprehension quiz for each book. This promotes voluminous reading and a love for books. Certificates are given and a "Sleep Over" is enjoyed by all who earn 250 or more points.

Foundational math skills are gained through hands-on experiences, digital tools and the Pearson curriculum. To learn concepts, children use counters, snap-cubes and individual dry-erase boards. Problem solving is emphasized and all ages enjoy working math problems on desktops using dry erase markers. Textbook enrichment materials challenge accelerated students and the digital program, IXL, allows them to progress above grade level. Grades 1-5 use (digital) Xtra Math, and are regularly time tested on grade level math facts.

A recent science textbook adoption (Macmillan) provides in depth treatment of topics and digital tools. Enthusiasm for this STEM curriculum is encouraged by an emphasis on science experiments and first-hand experiences. The school campus includes EDEN, a 176 acre outdoor education center including an amphitheater, an observation tower and a wetlands boardwalk. Teachers use this setting to extend the curriculum by conducting scientific observations and animal study. Field trips augment textbook content, including classes at the Oatland Island Marine Center. Fifth grades annually attend STARBASE, a week long science/engineering camp at the Hunter Army Airfield. They also travel to St. John's Island in South Carolina for a three-day science/ecology camp, a favorite Lower School experience.

Social studies is based on national standards, using Harcourt's Horizons series and is taught using projects, debates and video of 20th century events. Rich in history, the city of Savannah provides a setting for Civil War artifacts. The 234 acre campus is the site of the last major battle in Sherman's famed "March to the Sea." These historical grounds allow academic study and opportunity for teachers to bring history to life. Waters from recent Hurricane Matthew unearthed cannon balls from the Civil War. The annual celebration of Georgia Day promotes a study of history and current events with both children and teachers in costume. It features a "Wax Museum," with each student impersonating a famous Georgian. Dressed in costume, the figure comes to life when the "button" is pressed.

Civics holds a prominent place in LS curriculum. Using textbook and supplemental materials, teachers emphasize the importance of local, state and national government. For example, Grade 2 children identify the rules that they want to govern their classrooms and then sign their names to the official document. In third grade they learn about local and national government, and in fourth they learn about the role of the three branches of government, the Constitution and other historic documents. Fifth grade students dissect each phrase of the Preamble, read a full copy of the Constitution and memorize the Gettysburg Address. A recent school-wide mock election had poll workers, digital voting and election night tracking of the outcome. Civic responsibility is a vital outcome of these studies. SCPS children learn to care for others in the community by bringing scarves, gloves and caps for the homeless who live downtown, by visiting nursing homes (singing and taking socks for the residents), and by bringing canned foods for the Second

Harvest foodbank. Civics is central to the citizens they will become.

SCPS Pre-Kindergarten offers an environment rich in literature, art, phonics and math. Science/social studies units enhance the curriculum. Much learning occurs through hands-on activities, singing, stories and games. Small groups and one-to-one instruction allow use of differing content and strategies to fit the child. As a result, many learn to add, subtract and sound out CVC words in Pre-K. The phonics based curriculum provides thorough preparation for the upcoming Kindergarten program and translates into amazing academic success throughout their elementary school years.

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

The school's mission is "To develop the whole person to the glory of God." In support of this mission, every child in the Lower School receives weekly instruction in art, music, physical education and Spanish and biweekly instruction in media and computer. Classes are 30 to 40 minutes in length, taught by state certified teachers who have earned Master's degrees.

**Arts:** The joys and sorrows of life are often best expressed through music or art. SCPS Lower School children are given exceptional opportunities to develop their gifts in both. The Visual Arts Program encourages creativity and imagination, while developing motor skills and language. It provides exploration of art history, styles and periods through project based learning activities. A wide range of media are used, ranging from water color and tempera paint to yarn weavings, clay and bottle caps. Art periods, outstanding artists and examples of their work begin with the youngest children. Both an appreciation of art and a love for it are outcomes of this program. Children's exemplary art work is displayed in Akins Hall and in the annual K-12 Reflections Art Show.

The Music program engenders a love for music while teaching children to use their voices to match pitch and create harmonies. Rhythm and movement are essential parts of the curriculum. Children in Grades 3-5 actually read music using boom-whackers, Orff instruments and recorders. The work of classical composers is interspersed into the program and an appreciation of different genres of music is engendered. Performance opportunities are provided by concerts at Grandparents' Days and chapel programs as well as participation in the annual Talent Showcase and the SCPS Musical.

**Physical Education/Health:** Development of health and fitness skills for life has never been more important. Physical education supports Lower School students in the acquisition of essential skills, teaches them basic movements and promotes an active lifestyle. Research shows that regular physical activity promotes learning and memory. The program gives weekly directed activity to all students, helping them develop both physical and interactive skills. Through PE activities, cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness are developed. In 2013, student fundraising provided a Crossfit rig for each campus, allowing Crossfit for Children to become a reality. Physical education at SCPS promotes good health and good learning.

Fitness and social, emotional health are also encouraged through a daily recess period of 30 minutes for all children.

**Foreign Language:** The goal of the Lower School Spanish program is to introduce children to that language and the culture at a young age. Vocabulary is taught, with increasing competency expected at each grade level. Children sing songs, play games and watch Brain Pop segments in Spanish. To relate to the Latin culture, piñata parties and Spanish food tasting events are prepared by parent volunteers. Spanish holidays and customs are part of the curriculum, helping children to value the differences and similarities between cultures.

**Technology:** The goals of the technology program are to give students access to knowledge, to communicate and to create and publish ideas, all of which support the academic program. National standards govern the curriculum. Students learn a working technological vocabulary, know and practice internet safety, and responsibly operate different types of devices (including robots). Use of computers, i-Pads and Chromebooks for academic work becomes second nature to Lower School youngsters. Pre-K through first grade children learn mouse skills, vocabulary, internet safety and beginning coding. Second through fifth

grades focus on keyboarding, operating software/programs, internet safety and robotics.

Media: While many schools are combining media and technology positions, SCPS Lower School has chosen to provide a specialist in each field. The appreciation for literature and the love of reading is a gift SCPS wants to give every child. Scheduled class visits occur weekly for PreK and Kindergarten and biweekly for other grades. Personal visits to exchange books may occur anytime. Curricula engenders familiarity with authors, illustrators, award winning children's literature and use of the Destiny online card catalog. Learning in all subject-areas is supported by a robust media program that circulated 26,550 books last year for 530 children. The Reading Counts Program provides incentive for prolific reading, with 42 children reading more than a million words in 2015-2016.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

SCPS teachers use a variety of methodologies to engage and teach youngsters who have widely differing needs. Instruction within the Lower School is differentiated in a variety of ways. For example, teachers at each grade level analyze test scores and identify criteria to determine which children are ready for accelerated curricula in Reading and Math and which students will need learning support. A plan is designed for each child that involves staffing, materials and strategies to meet his needs. In Pre-Kindergarten, the teacher may differentiate instruction by using sand trays to review consonant sounds with one group while the assistant uses flashcards to review consonant-vowel-consonant words with an accelerated group. In fifth grade, while studying historical fiction, one group may read *Ghost Cadet* by Elaine Alphin (Lexile 830) while others read *Elijah Buxton* by Christopher Curtis (Lexile 1070). The first group would dialog, answering factual and comprehension questions. The accelerated group would answer questions requiring analysis, synthesis and evaluation (based on Bloom's Taxonomy).

Tiered instructional strategies are used by assessing the level of understanding within a lesson and assigning a unique activity for each group. For example, the SCPS music teacher gave each of four groups a paper with the notes they were to play using boom-whackers. Each group read their "music," identified their song and played it for the class.

Technology in the classroom enhances student involvement. SCPS utilizes Chromebooks in Grades 3-5 and iPads in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade. Older students research using Chromebooks, type assigned papers and collaborate using their Google Apps for Education email accounts. Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 2 use iPads for Reading Counts tests, to review math facts using Xtra Math and Mathopolis, hear stories using a listening center and participate in learning activities using the Osmo system. With iPads, students can work in groups using apps such as Kahoot to respond to review questions on the SmartBoard.

To improve student and school performance, SCPS uses a variety of assessment instruments. The Stanford Achievement Test is administered to every Kindergarten-Grade 5 student each spring. Given under carefully controlled conditions, the outcome is highly reliable in identifying strengths and needs. Using that data, plans are made for students' acceleration or remediation. Grade level teams develop improvement plans for the coming year. Administrators identify students scoring below the 50th percentile and make plans for academic intervention.

The Scholastic Reading Inventory is a computer assessment that measures reading ability, described in Lexiles. Given three times a year, the May score is used as one criterion for placement in an Accelerated Reading group. Low scorers are closely monitored and tutoring may be recommended.

A certified specialist in the Learning Support Center provides daily instruction for children who are identified by educational testing as needing this service. Children have made remarkable progress in reading and math as a result of this specialized curriculum and small group instruction. The Wide Range Achievement Test is used to pre- and post-test students, measuring their progress during the year. Results are used for dismissal from the program or to identify areas needing further remediation.

Numerous other assessments are used by the Lower School to glean student information. The Otis Lennon School Ability Test is given to all third grade students, identifying children who have exceptional ability and those who may evidence a learning disability. In either case, professional testing may be recommended. The Slingerland Screening Test is given in second grade to predict potential learning difficulties. The counselor and teacher meet with parents of children who appear to be in the high risk group. Together they identify ways to strengthen target skills. Other helpful tools include the Gesell Developmental Observation to identify developmental delays and the Copeland System Checklist that identifies children with potential attention issues. The use of these assessment tools alerts specialists to potential needed interventions.

High levels of achievement are encouraged by accelerated reading and math programs and by challenging digital apps. IXL is a frequently used math program that allows students to gain above-grade-level concepts. High achievement is recognized by the Honors Program for students having quarterly averages between 87 and 100%.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The Lower School motivates students academically through effective teaching, meaningful content and the intrinsic reward of doing well. This includes the use of varied instructional strategies. For example, classes can often be found on the school lawn running relays to get the answers to math problems. The team to correctly answer all their problems is the winner. Teachers engage children by using SmartBoard games, desktop math using dry erase pens and Chromebook research. First-hand experiences are especially motivating! Lower School children enjoy science experiments and field trips to the Children’s Theatre, historic Charleston and the Jacksonville Zoo.

Social relationships are encouraged through informal activities such as the fifth grade basketball and wrestling. Opportunities for service as well as social interaction are provided by the Friends of the Environment Club (that handles paper recycling), the Safety Patrol and The Raider Report (a daily student produced TV show). Friendships are formed during daily free-play and the many after school activities that are offered (including Soccer, Crazy 8’s Math, Snapology, ballet, art, gymnastics, and Scouts).

Emotionally, students receive support from their teachers, the counselor, and administrators. Bullying is not permitted and the Golden Rule is taught. Individual and group guidance is given, with classroom guidance encouraging children to be “bucket fillers.” If a child is experiencing a serious need, however, parents are consulted and a recommendation is made for assistance from outside sources.

Teachers are highly respected both in and outside of the school. They are supported by administration, being given immediate attention to their needs, whether it is a behavioral issue or a malfunctioning A/C unit. They have an open door to their administrators and know that every effort will be made to help them. The Parent-Teacher Fellowship is especially supportive, contributing funds to faculty accounts, serving as volunteers and honoring staff with several lunches each year. The longevity of faculty speaks volumes about their commitment and satisfaction. Thirty-one LS teachers have taught with SCPS for 337 years, an average of 11 years per person.

Ultimately, it is the teacher who makes the biggest motivational difference for children. In a survey last May, students shared what they liked best about their teacher. Responses included:

“She teaches new things to me and she makes it easy to learn.”  
“She helps us learn and gives us one-on-one time.”  
“I like that my teacher cares for me and loves me.”

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

We could not accomplish all that we do without the help of our involved parents. From volunteering in the classrooms to chaperoning field trips to organizing class events, SCPS families are integral parts of our school community. Working closely with classroom teachers, parents assist with many activities including class projects and field trips. Children are encouraged to do well when they see their dads coaching and their moms substituting. An active Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF) group provides outreach to new families, a used uniform service, a teacher appreciation luncheon each quarter, and immense support with academic needs. In the last five years they have provided Chromebooks and carts, iPads, document cameras and more. A large parent team came and assisted with the installation of playground equipment in 2015. Parents enthusiastically support their children when report card honors are awarded each quarter. With this kind of support, it is understandable that more than 80% of children in Grades 3-5 regularly earn honor roll status.

The school year begins with a parent orientation for each grade level, allowing parents to meet their child’s

teacher and receive an overview of the coming year. Needs and expectations are shared, giving parents information to better support their children's success. Students are invited to meet their teachers and visit their classrooms the day before school starts. Within the first two weeks, teachers make a positive contact with each family, conveying good news about their child's performance or behavior, paving the way for parent engagement and support.

To better engage families and community, the Lower School utilizes various forms of media to communicate with its constituents. Both groups are kept updated via weekly electronic newsletters from the Headmaster and Principals, the SCPS and teacher websites, monthly calendars and online social media.

Through NetClassroom, Lower School parents have access to electronic progress reports, grades and attendance. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled each fall, with informal conferences scheduled at parental request. To further communicate student progress, weekly assignments are sent home for parent review, allowing parents to discuss student work with their children.

School and family partnerships are key to the success of Lower School children. A wide variety of family-oriented activities occur throughout the school-year, providing opportunities for teachers and families to bond. These events include book fairs, chapel programs, sporting events, family fun nights, Super Saturday and Grandparents' Day.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The Lower School professional development program enhances student learning by providing instructional support for its teachers. It bases staff development specifically on areas of need. Goals are identified through alignment of curriculum with academic standards, through a study of accreditation recommendations, an analysis of standardized test scores, and in response to teacher requests. Administrators believe that when professional development activities are viewed as relevant, teachers are apt to put them into practice.

For example, there was an immediate need for training when SmartBoards were placed in all classrooms. This was done using whole group and small group instruction. Today every teacher uses the SmartBoard for instructional activities, learning games and in the teaching of virtually every subject!

In the past five years the LS has provided numerous staff development opportunities. Strategies include the use of outside experts such as Lesley Roessing, Director of the Coastal Savannah Writing Project, who provided techniques for teaching writing. As a result, student writing has improved dramatically. Dr. Judy Sturgess provided 11 workshops in "Classroom Strategies." Today student work lines the hallways, reflecting those strategies. Staff development is also provided through an annual peer observation. Last spring teachers identified a subject area they wished to improve and administrators chose an exemplary teacher in that area. This had a double benefit. New strategies were given to the observing teacher and those who were observed felt honored to be role models.

Staff development opportunities have also been given to Lower School staff through state and regional conferences. More than 50 conferences have been attended by LS teachers in the past five years. Faculty attend the Georgia Educational Technology Conference annually and teachers return with a plethora of cutting-edge ideas. Conference attendees give a presentation to the faculty, sharing the highlights.

An analysis of 50+ staff development activities reveals a definite pattern. Technology instruction has been most often sought and provided. Perhaps this is because it is so vital in the classroom - the language that children speak. Strategies for teaching writing, a challenging subject with little textbook support, ranked second in frequency. Health-related seminars ranked third - First Aid, CPR, diabetes training and use of epi-pens.

Reimbursement for courses taken in a Master's program constitutes the most substantial support given to SCPS faculty. Last year three LS teachers completed graduate degrees and are now sharing the benefits of that study with their students.

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

Lower School student success is inspired by the following leadership philosophy:

**PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Strategy for Academic Success: Commitment

## PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$11906  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$1981

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      4%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      22%

**PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS**

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** SAT 10 Primary 3  
Form A

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	84
Number of students tested	72
Percent of total students tested	90
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 3 Reading and Math: Learning Disability–5 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder/ Anxiety Disorder-3 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group was comprised of 8 students, 10% of the class.

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** SAT 10 Intermediate  
1 Form A

**Grade:** 4

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	85
Number of students tested	71
Percent of total students tested	88
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 4 Reading and Math: Learning Disability-5 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder-5 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group were comprised of 10 students, 12% of the class.

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** SAT 10  
Intermediate 2 Form A

**Grade:** 5

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	93
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	86
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 5 Reading and Math Notes: Learning Disability-2 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder/ Anxiety Disorder-7 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group was comprised of 9 students, 14% of the class.

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** SAT 10 Primary 3  
Form A

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	85
Number of students tested	72
Percent of total students tested	90
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 3 Reading and Math: Learning Disability–5 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder/ Anxiety Disorder-3 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group was comprised of 8 students, 10% of the class.

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** SAT 10 Intermediate  
1 Form A

**Grade:** 4

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	84
Number of students tested	71
Percent of total students tested	88
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 4 Reading and Math: Learning Disability-5 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder-5 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group were comprised of 10 students, 12% of the class.

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA

**Test:** SAT 10  
Intermediate 2 Form A

**Grade:** 5

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2003

**Publisher:** Pearson

**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	92
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	86
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Other 1</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:** Grade 5 Reading and Math Notes: Learning Disability-2 students; Other Health Impairment/ Attention Deficit Disorder/ Anxiety Disorder-7 students. All received the modification of small group testing, extended time, the reading of an unknown word in a non-reading subtest and/or on-task encouragement. The group was comprised of 9 students, 14% of the class.