

**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 Mrs. Kate O'Brien

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

Official School Name Holy Family Catholic Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2515 Palatine Road

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

City Inverness      State IL      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60067-4567

County Cook

Telephone (847) 907-3452      Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.holyfamilycatholicacademy.net      E-mail kobrien@holyfamilyparish.org

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Jim Rigg      E-mail jrigg@archchicago.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Chicago      Tel. (312) 534-5200

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. Kevin Harris

(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
<b>PreK</b>	55	55	110
<b>K</b>	29	17	46
<b>1</b>	22	26	48
<b>2</b>	16	16	32
<b>3</b>	22	20	42
<b>4</b>	12	25	37
<b>5</b>	14	20	34
<b>6</b>	18	22	40
<b>7</b>	16	13	29
<b>8</b>	13	24	37
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	217	238	455

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 81 % White
  - 5 % 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: 3%

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	477
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.031
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, Croatian

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %  
Total number students who qualify: 26

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %  
34 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>18</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	20
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 10:1
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	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
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  No

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

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

Holy Family Catholic Academy prepares students to become leaders and thinkers, grounded in their faith through innovation, inquiry learning, and applied technology.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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### Community:

Holy Family Catholic Academy (HFCA) is an integral part of Holy Family Catholic Community, a parish of 4,200 families and a member of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the nation's largest private school system. HFCA educates over 450 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. Students reside in twenty-seven different zip codes, and graduates attend over 15 different high schools. The school welcomes families representing over twenty different faith communities including Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim religions.

Approximately 50% of families with students in kindergarten through grade 8 receive some form of financial assistance. Providing scholarships, needs-based assistance, and multi-child discounts helps the school achieve more economic and ethnic diversity. In 2016, almost 20% of students were minority including 14% Hispanic or multiracial, compared to 4% of the population of Inverness.

HFCA has a highly involved Parent Association. Our 339 families contribute over 18,000 volunteer hours to our school. Service to others is a major focus of families and students.

### History:

HFCA was founded in 2002 as the first new Catholic elementary school in Chicago's northwest suburbs in over 35 years. The school opened with 29 students in kindergarten and first grade and held classes in reconfigured church meeting rooms. Following a "grow-a-school" model, a new grade was added each year. Pre-kindergarten classes were offered in 2003.

Building additions were completed in 2008 and 2012, adding more than 40,000 square feet of education space, including 14 classrooms, science lab, library, and art room. HFCA celebrated its first graduating class in 2010 and continued to expand to two classrooms per grade.

In 2012, HFCA was nationally recognized as a Catholic School of Tomorrow for Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction. This award recognized our "thinking curriculum" as well as the leadership role the school and faculty played in sharing their knowledge of inquiry-based learning. Academy teachers trained teachers in 61 other Catholic schools, many in disadvantaged areas.

New leadership began in 2013 with an increased focus on new programs. In 2015, HFCA became the first school in the Archdiocese, and the first known school in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, to be accepted as a Candidate\* in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB). The school also became the first preschool through grade 8 school in the Chicago-area to implement a nationally certified outdoor classroom, and was one of the first schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago to have an on-site visit for AdvancED accreditation. The school was again nationally recognized as a Catholic School for Tomorrow for Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction for its middle school Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Program.

In 2016, construction of a second science lab dedicated to hands-on instruction for preschool through grade 5 learners was completed.

### Key Strategies:

HFCA is committed to educating each child to his/her full potential. Since its inception, the school has maintained a culture of continuous improvement. As an IB Candidate,\* the school has adopted the IB learner profile consisting of ten attributes of successful global citizens. These attributes (inquirers, thinkers, communicators, knowledgeable, open-minded, principled, reflective, caring, balanced, courageous) are nurtured through differentiated instruction, inquiry-based learning, an integrated curriculum, and our faith-based school community.

Differentiated instruction is accomplished with a low student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1 accomplished by using teacher assistants. Unlike teacher aides, HFCA's teacher assistants are degreed, instructional, and part of the teaching team. Learning is maximized through small group instruction that allows all students the opportunity to be equally engaged and appropriately challenged. Flexible groupings are determined through ongoing teacher evaluations and may be based on ability, learning style, personality type, or subject. Mixed-age groupings are also used to mirror the workplace environment.

Inquiry-based learning begins in pre-kindergarten. Students work in teams thereby allowing students at different developmental stages to experiment, observe, research, and collaborate in problem solving.

Curriculum is seamlessly integrated to include technology, Spanish, Art, Music, Physical Education and most importantly service to others through our faith. The school's outdoor classroom expands learning beyond the classroom, improves concentration, boosts creativity and collaboration, and nurtures the mind, body and soul. This unique space to play and learn is part of HFCA's overall commitment to outdoor education which also includes two overnight trips for students in grade 5 through grade 7.

Faith is integrated into everything at HFCA as it strives to develop each child academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Many of our inquiry-based learning units are linked to Catholic social teachings, and students participate in a number of outreach activities, including, an annual kNOW Hunger Campaign which has contributed several tons of food to local food pantries, contributions to our military, clothing drives, and care for God's creation through our outdoor classroom.

\*Candidacy is not a guarantee of final authorization.



## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

HFCA's core curriculum is academically rigorous and integrates knowledge with faith and service. Curriculum is established by the Archdiocese of Chicago and aligned with the Common Core State Standards, College and Career Readiness Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and vertically and horizontally aligned with the IB framework. HFCA is committed to a differentiated and challenging curriculum that prepares all students to succeed in high school, college and beyond and become informed, active citizens. HFCA's two-time national award for innovation in curriculum instruction and IB candidacy\* gives witness to this commitment and culture of continuous improvement.

#### Reading and Language Arts:

HFCA's language arts program integrates reading and writing with listening, speaking, grammar, and spelling skills, and uses whole class, small group and individualized instruction. Teacher assistants in each classroom allow for a deeper, more rigorous level of instruction and differentiation, thus giving opportunity to extend student learning and maximize educational goals. Classroom teachers receive multi-sensory language training, and additional support is provided by the school's reading specialist. Teachers use a variety of resources to assist students in comprehending literature and informational text, and integrate literacy into content areas of science and social studies.

HFCA's writing workshop goal is to develop extraordinary writers. Writers work towards clear goals utilizing the writing process. The primary methods of instruction include demonstration, guided practice, inquiry, and responsive observation and coaching. Advanced students extend their writing through content integration, including a global perspective.

Oral communication is a critical component of inquiry-based learning units and beginning in kindergarten students present final work products to the class, often using technology-generated presentation skills.

#### Mathematics:

HFCA's mathematics curriculum begins with the "end in mind" and is designed with a top-down alignment. Mathematical concepts and foundational skills developed in the elementary grades align and strengthen our middle school curriculum. Differentiated math groups are led by the classroom teachers and teacher assistants. Students are pre-assessed allowing teachers to identify mastery. Mathematical literacy is developed as students are taught to use evidence and reasoning to support their answers.

Middle school mathematics curriculum offers six distinct classes, and students are grouped according to ability, not grade. Students are positioned to complete Algebra 1 and Advanced Algebra before high school. HFCA offers an Honors Geometry course for high ability students, using curriculum, teaching resources, and assessments shared by the district high school. Approximately 25% of the 2016 grade 8 students were enrolled in Honors Geometry, a validation that HFCA provides a rigorous and challenging mathematics curriculum that prepares students for high school and beyond.

#### Science:

HFCA's science curriculum emphasizes hands-on, small group instruction. Using inquiry-based learning, students are presented with authentic issues ("the hook") and then investigate the issue by applying scientific principles and processes.

Research-based teaching resources created by scientists and educators, rather than textbook companies, are used throughout all grades and include LabLearner for pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP) for middle school.

HFCA advances learning with two distinct, fully-equipped laboratories and a nationally certified outdoor classroom which provides an authentic hands-on laboratory for studying the natural world.

Recognizing the significant role that Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers

play in the future workforce, HFCA offers a robust STEM program. The middle school's rigorous curriculum is significantly expanded to include a two-hour weekly "hands-on/minds-on" STEM class. This program was recognized nationally for its innovation. Students annually rotate through four modules and include presentations from STEM professionals. Currently, students are studying forensic science, space missions, solar energy and high altitude balloon launch. Upon graduation, students will have completed twelve STEM modules gaining exposure to authentic experiences and an introduction to a variety of careers.

#### Social Studies/ Civic Engagement:

Social studies instruction uses inquiry-based learning and focuses on history, geography and our place in our society. The curriculum is enhanced with field trips to the community, museums, and a four-day trip to Washington, D.C. in grade 8.

Many of the social studies units are tied to Catholic social teachings which call us to develop knowledgeable, caring and participatory global citizens who actively participate in political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of society. Likewise, the IB framework encourages intercultural understanding and global engagement.

HFCA's pre-kindergarten curriculum is aligned with Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards and provides play-based experiences that develop age-appropriate cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, and physical skills. Pre-reading skills lay the foundation for primary grades' reading and language arts curriculum resulting in most kindergarten students becoming successful readers during the fall. The curriculum also includes writing centers, pre-mathematics, science, Spanish language instruction, music and physical education. Inquiry-based learning is introduced, and monthly STEM sessions introduce concepts like force and motion, ramps, and physical changes in a hands-on manner. The curriculum creates a seamless continuum of learning that extends through middle school.

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

HFCA is committed to developing the whole child and integrates the arts, physical education, Spanish, technology and religion into content areas. Staff dedicated to Art, Music, Spanish, and Physical Education attend professional development, IB training, and collaborate with classroom faculty to effectively integrate their respective curriculum into core content areas for all students.

#### Visual Art:

Students learn basic art and design concepts and are introduced to art history and the work of various artists. Emphasis is on creativity and providing experience in various art media including paint, pencils, crayons, clay, and multimedia. The spacious art room is equipped with a kiln. Students' art is displayed throughout the school and posted on Artsonia, an online art gallery. Middle school students utilize their writing skills to reflect on the artistic process. Kindergarten through grade 5 meet once a week for one hour. Middle school students meet twice a week for forty-five minutes each session.

#### Music and Performing Arts:

Music is taught to students beginning in pre-kindergarten and continues through grade 8. Students learn through singing, movement, listening, and playing basic rhythm instruments at the appropriate grade levels. The Music teacher leads three grade level choirs. Band instruction is optional and is available beginning in grade 5.

Students in kindergarten through grade 5 participate in a musical performance. Middle school students have increased exposure to the performing arts. HFCA collaborates with nearby Harper College and has access to the college's adjunct Drama instructors and their Performing Arts facilities. Middle school students meet during the college's winter break for a one week concentrated performing arts module consisting of 15 hours. HFCA students write and perform a wide range of artistic expression including improvisation, dramatic reading, and creative movement. A musical performance is presented each spring.

Music classes for kindergarten through grade 5 meet twice a week for 30 minutes and grades 6 through 8 meet once a week for 45 minutes.

#### Physical Education:

Physical Education encompasses teaching small and large motor skills, physical exercise, team sports, health, and nutrition. The students have Physical Education two times a week for 30-45 minute periods. Students participate in warm up activities, then most often group or team sports or games.

#### Spanish Language:

Spanish instruction is delivered primarily in Spanish and is taught by native Spanish speakers. Instruction begins in pre-kindergarten and continues through grade 8 and focuses on basic vocabulary development, grammar, spelling and conversational Spanish, and the history and culture of Spanish-speaking peoples. Kindergarten through grade 5 meet twice a week for thirty minutes. Holy Family Catholic Academy is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

Middle school students receive Spanish instruction three times a week for forty-five minute classes. The goal of the middle school Spanish program is to prepare students for Spanish II upon entering high school. HFCA uses the high school Spanish I curriculum and completes it during middle school. Along with the high school textbook, students also use an online text and Internet practice activities.

#### Technology:

HFCA enhances students' learning by integrating technology routinely and transparently into the curriculum. There is no separate technology class. Research and information fluency are integral to students' education, and students learn to access, organize, evaluate, and communicate information as they are working. Classrooms are equipped with interactive projectors and devices including iPads, Chromebooks, desktops and laptops. Technology supports student-centered project-based learning and thus an actively engaged student invested in his/her learning. The Technology Coach collaborates with our faculty and identifies relevant technology that differentiates instruction and enhances our rigorous curriculum. Students have access to 1:1 technology in their classrooms. Kindergarten through grade 2 use iPads, grades 3-5 are introduced to cloud computing through the use of Chromebooks. Middle school uses a variety of laptops and tablets. HFCA invested in its wireless infrastructure to ensure support of wireless connection in every classroom.

#### Religion:

Religion is integrated into all subject areas. The school community begins each day with a shared prayer followed by individual intentions in each classroom. Students attend Mass weekly and lead the community in readings and song. In addition to the Archdiocesan curriculum, inquiry-based learning units often involve a call to action. Cross-grade level groups meet in "Neighborhoods" and work together to support the local community, the greater area and international needs.

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

Instruction at HFCA consists of actively engaged students in small groups, teacher led centers, or teams. Instruction through traditional lecture style is minimal. Inquiry learning provides a "hands-on, minds-on" approach to science and social studies units.

HFCA begins each school year with all students completing assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers utilize AIMSweb benchmark testing for reading and mathematics, and writing prompts are given to assess writing skills. These assessments inform instruction and determine differentiated groups within each classroom. Additional assessments are administered in January and May. Teachers discuss the data results with those at the same grade level, across grade levels, and share their findings with parents and students. In addition to AIMSweb benchmarks, students in kindergarten-grade 5 are assessed using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Teachers alternate reading fiction and nonfiction texts with this tool to better understand comprehension with different genres. Middle school students initially take the Orleans Hanna Algebra Prognosis Test for placement into math courses as well as an end of year course final.

Beginning in 2016, students in grade 3 through grade 8 were administered the ACT Aspire Summative Test.

HFCA students performed at or above the Archdiocesan averages for all content areas and significantly above the national averages. Students also take the ACT Aspire interim assessment, which allows students more opportunities to practice rigorous test questions and provides HFCA immediate feedback in the areas of reading, English, mathematics, and science. Students' individual scores are reviewed thoroughly, and strengths as well as areas in need of support are identified. Teachers also use this information to further create small group, targeted instruction.

HFCA leadership and teachers discuss the results of all assessments and make plans for continuous school improvement. Teachers target standards that can be strengthened. For example, during the 2016-2017 school year, HFCA's Continuous School Improvement Plan is focused on lesson plans aimed at improving the reading strand of Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Additionally, the leadership has identified writing as an area of focus in our current school improvement process and recently attended professional development with other leaders to improve student outcomes in writing.

Having both a teacher and teacher assistant in classrooms allows the Academy to create small literacy and math groupings. Typically, there is one below level group, two on grade level groups and an above level group; however that may vary based on the students' needs. Response to Intervention (RtI) and Restorative Practices and Discipline helps HFCA staff intervene promptly to students struggling academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

HFCA's reading specialist works with students with diagnosed reading disorders or those that are performing below grade level expectations. The reading specialist utilizes the Wilson reading program, Visualizing and Verbalizing, and will soon use the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System. She not only provides her own plan for students based on her individual or small group assessments, but also supplements the work that takes place in the classroom.

Recognizing the importance of keeping children academically engaged over the summer, HFCA teachers create summer learning packets for pre-kindergarten through grade 8 students that include reading and math practice activities.

Upon graduation, student's high school achievement is also monitored. Surveys completed by students, parents and high school administrators indicate that HFCA students are academically prepared, participate in clubs and extracurricular activities and successfully transition to high school. This is a true measure of the effectiveness of the learning strategies and approaches used at HFCA.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

The foundation of HFCA's culture and mission is to develop leaders, thinkers grounded in faith.

HFCA students are leaders. Leadership competencies are taught in the primary grades by focusing on the social and emotional traits of effective leaders including integrity, empathy and conflict resolution. Goal setting and self-evaluation are integrated throughout the curriculum.

HFCA students are thinkers. Its “thinking curriculum” focuses on problem solving through differentiated instruction and inquiry-based learning. Students learn the value of teamwork as they collaborate in problem solving and together create a final product that demonstrates student learning.

HFCA students are grounded in faith. They learn that we are all called, no matter our age, to learn about important issues, seek to affect change, and respond to people in need. Many inquiry-based learning units are tied to Catholic social teachings, and students learn to examine multiple solutions through a moral, ethical lens.

As an organization, HFCA also follows this mission. During its brief history, HFCA has been recognized as a leader nationally and in the Archdiocese of Chicago, the nation's largest private school system. The school has welcomed observations from preschool, elementary, middle school and high schools teachers interested in HFCA's curriculum and instruction. HFCA intends to continue this practice upon completion of its candidacy and authorization as an International Baccalaureate World School Primary Years Programme.

HFCA has been a thinker in thoughtfully researching data-driven best practices in education and instilling a culture of continuous improvement.

HFCA is grounded in faith. It diligently works to create a warm and welcoming environment that promotes service to others, spiritual growth, and moral decision making. Families of all Christian and non-Christian faiths are welcomed and respected.

HFCA's dedicated teaching staff commits itself to the vision of the school and continually works to improve all aspects of HFCA. Over 75% of HFCA's teachers in kindergarten through grade 8 have advanced degrees. Teachers are supported by leadership and work closely with colleagues in professional learning communities, training, and mentoring to implement best practices in curriculum and instruction.

HFCA's parent community likewise supports and commends the teaching staff. The Parent Association hosts staff luncheons, provides monthly “teacher treats,” and sponsors a week-long Teacher Appreciation celebration that recognizes the trust, appreciation and dedication of these consummate professionals.

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

HFCA was founded by a small, grassroots group of dedicated parents interested in a warm and welcoming, innovative, faith-based school. Foundationally, there was a commitment to engaging families and the larger community. It is often said, when a new student enrolls at HFCA he or she does not enter alone; his or her family enters with him or her. HFCA's admission process includes a school tour, meeting with the principal, and a shadow day for the student. At each step in this process, the new student and family are welcomed and become part of the vision and mission of the school.

Embracing parents as partners has helped grow HFCA from 29 students in 2002 to over 450, and greatly contributed to the vitality of the school. Many of HFCA parents provide professional assistance in the governance of the school as members of the School Advisory Board as well as guest speakers in our classrooms. Parents have partnered with faculty in exposing students to a variety of careers including

forensic science, aviation, technology, medicine, and graphic design.

This contribution is applauded by HFCA's faculty and staff. Annually, the faculty, as servant leaders, provide two breakfasts for students and parents in gratitude for this important partnership.

As a private school, fundraising is always critical. HFCA parents and members of the larger community have annually generated significant financial support at the annual Gala.

Communication plays a significant role in building and maintaining family engagement. HFCA uses multiple strategies to connect with parents. The school hosts many parent education events covering such issues as resiliency, effective parenting strategies, and Internet safety. While some of these events are held at the school, others are webinars or podcasts that can be attended off-site. Communication strategies also include newsletters, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest posts and regularly submitted articles to the local online newspapers. Our school's SchoolRush! application functions as an in-house Twitter where parents can receive messages, reminders, and photos about daily happenings at school and in their child's classroom.

HFCA is also committed to building relationships with the area public and Catholic high schools attended by HFCA graduates. HFCA takes the goal of preparing students for high school and beyond very seriously and regularly reviews curriculum with the respective high schools. Communicating curriculum enhancements establishes credibility for HFCA and also provides an opportunity to advocate for proper course placement.

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

HFCA is committed to providing high quality professional development to its teachers as implementing best practice resources and strategies leads to increased student performance. The leadership of HFCA routinely takes advantage of opportunities to grow and, in turn, lead the staff. Each year, teachers participate in professional development during six early release days, six or more staff development days, and twice a month staff meetings devoted to on and off-site professional development.

HFCA asks all faculty members to participate in professional development, including office staff and teacher assistants. It is important for all those who work with students to use a common language and shared philosophy when interacting with the student body. More than 40 hours of professional development have been provided to date this year. Teachers have participated in an all school retreat, Lab Learner science lab training, Nature Explore outdoor classroom workshop, Restorative Discipline Training, and an anxiety presentation by a licensed clinical social worker.

Staff days have included in-depth analysis ACT Aspire test results, in-service meetings on new curricular materials, IB inquiry unit writing and assessment training, and Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) planning. The early release days allow for the early childhood, primary, intermediate and middle school teams to meet. Technology training is a part of each early release afternoon. Topics covered include coding, Google Classroom and Quizzes, Osmo, Code-a-pillar, a variety of instructional iPad applications, SchoolRush!, and the new InFocus interactive whiteboard. End of the year staff days allow for additional professional development for the coming new year allowing teams to reflect upon the units taught during the year, and plan changes for the following year. Teachers continue to collaborate not only with their grade level teachers, but also across grades and with content area teachers.

In addition to whole school opportunities for growth, each contracted teacher may use up to \$1200 toward professional development of his/her choice. Teachers pursue graduate degrees, attend IB workshops, and attend Office of Catholic Schools workshops as well as other educational organizational conferences. HFCA is awarded Title IIA funds, as well, and these support both professional development related to school-wide goals and individual teacher goals. As teachers return from off-site professional development, they are expected to share their learning with their peers.

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

The principal and assistant principal are the instructional leaders of HFCA. Both administrators have two Masters' Degrees, each with an advanced degree in leadership, and share the same philosophy in being fully integrated into all aspects of the school. They are very involved in the school day including visiting classrooms, conducting informal and formal observations, meeting with individual staff on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, attending team meetings, hiring and inducting new staff, overseeing the budget and operations, meeting with parents and new families, assessing data, and leading professional development.

The leadership team of Holy Family Catholic Academy involves a plethora of staff and volunteers. The principal and assistant principal are supported by a Director of School Development, the Building Leadership Team, comprised of faculty from preschool, primary, intermediate and middle school, the IB Leadership Team, the IB Coordinator, a school counselor, an office manager, a bookkeeper, the School Advisory Board, the Parent Association, and the Pastor of Holy Family Catholic Community. All of these members work closely and confer on a regular basis to ensure their shared vision reaches fruition.

HFCA and all stakeholders are committed to the mission of "Leaders, Thinkers, Grounded in Faith." Every member of the community is dedicated to sharing his/her gifts, talents, and expertise in conjunction with the principal and assistant principal. HFCA's exemplary staff of leaders focus 100% of their efforts on what is best for students and create a positive, caring environment for all to thrive. The principal's and assistant principal's inclusive, lead by example style empowers and encourages leadership among staff, thus investing staff to the school and children.

HFCA leadership collaborates with a variety of colleagues and other local principals. The principal is a member of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Curriculum Advisory Committee charged with reviewing and recommending system-wide curriculum enhancements and has developed working relationships with area high school administrators ensuring HFCA's curriculum best positions its graduates to succeed in high school and beyond. These relationships have also including guest high school teachers instructing at HFCA.

HFCA would not be complete without its student leadership. With support from their teachers, students model positive leadership for other students through Student Council, morning announcements, IB Attributes and Learner Profiles, essential agreements, and a Restorative Discipline program that promotes and highlights positive student behaviors and problem solving techniques. Shared leadership directly and positively influences the community of HFCA.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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At HFCA, a defining strategy for academic success is a multi-tiered approach to differentiated instruction and learning. All students are progress monitored for placement and receive small group instruction. Additionally, pre-assessments are administered in any given content area allowing for fluid instruction between groupings based on student data, thus maximizing learning opportunities as well as building confidence. A hallmark of HFCA is two instructors in every class from pre-kindergarten through grade 5, allowing classroom teachers to create up to four instructional levels utilizing their teaching assistants. HFCA further differentiates mathematics by placing students in the appropriate mathematical level and not binding them to a grade level program. This is supported by having a department chair who monitors the entire mathematical program. Additionally, four designated middle school mathematics teachers support the curriculum and instruction in kindergarten through grade 5.



## PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

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

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

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$6900  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$2138

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      12%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      50%

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

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** Aspire

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Publisher:** ACT

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	41
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	421
Number of students tested	37
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	425
Number of students tested	43
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	427
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	430
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 8  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	432
Number of students tested	25
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 3  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	41
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**



**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	419
Number of students tested	37
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	422
Number of students tested	43
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	425
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	427
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2015

**Test:** Aspire  
**Publisher:** ACT

**Grade:** 8  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	430
Number of students tested	25
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<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:**