

**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. Barbara Stevens

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

Official School Name Saint Francis Cathedral School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 528 Main Street

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

City Metuchen      State NJ      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 08840-1439

County Middlesex

Telephone (732) 548-3107      Fax (732) 548-5760

Web site/URL http://www.stfranciscathedralschool.org      E-mail stevensb@stfranciscathedralschool.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\*Ms. Ellen Ayoub      E-mail eayoub@diometuchen.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Metuchen      Tel. (732) 562-2443

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. Boris Moczula  
(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	21	33	54
K	25	29	54
1	28	28	56
2	23	20	43
3	21	24	45
4	29	19	48
5	23	19	42
6	20	15	35
7	18	22	40
8	20	17	37
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	228	226	454

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 16 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 57 % 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: 19%

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	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	60
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	88
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	470
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.187
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

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

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

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

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
11 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>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
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	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 22:1
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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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.

St. Francis Cathedral School creates a Catholic atmosphere where children are challenged to develop respect, justice, and responsibility while growing intellectually and spiritually into leaders of the 21st Century.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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The story of our school began in 1928 when St. Francis of Assisi School opened its doors to 81 students in Grades 1–3. The school was dedicated on Sunday, September 17, 1929. St. Francis was part of the Trenton Diocese until 1981 when the Trenton Diocese was divided and the Metuchen Diocese was formed. This formation made the Borough of Metuchen the See of the new Diocese and, at this time, the name of the school was changed to Saint Francis Cathedral School (SFCS). The school was under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy until 2001. Currently, our school is under the direction of a lay principal and vice-principal along with the presence of two Sisters of Christian Charity.

whole child: spiritually, intellectually, socially, physically, and morally. Students are challenged to live their lives as witnesses to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor, and especially to be mindful of and to assist those who are most in need. We begin and end our day with prayer. We join together for prayer services and Eucharistic celebrations.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

St. Francis Cathedral School has a clearly articulated and rigorous curriculum which is aligned with the Diocese of Metuchen, the state of New Jersey and Common Core guidelines. We are a community that has at its center a deep reverence for Gospel values which colors everything that we do. Our school clearly focuses on student success by setting high standards for both faculty and students. We are dedicated to implementing a culture that supports challenging and equitable educational programs so that all students achieve their full potential. Effective instruction is assured through the development and ongoing infusion of technology throughout the curriculum, so as to equip our students with 21st century skills that are necessary to embrace the future.

As a faculty, we at St. Francis regularly review and evaluate the goals that we set for our students, and identify areas in our curriculum and needs of the students that may require support, using such tools as Terra Nova and benchmarks. This in turn guides us to instruction that is differentiated and aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards, allowing us to reach and teach a diverse population of students. Mapping in subject areas makes for a smooth transition from one level to the next so as to maximize efficiency. Faculty endeavor to motivate students by incorporating topics of student interest in order to engage students in dialogue. This fosters engagement so that the students are more active in the learning process.

The goal of our Language Arts curriculum is to provide students with the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college and career. Consistency of instruction is ensured through the use of the Harcourt Storytown Literacy Program in the primary and intermediate grades. The primary and intermediate grade faculty employ curriculum mapping to plot the teaching of essential comprehension skills, creative writing, grammar and spelling. Reading progresses from the decoding and spelling of basic sight words and simple sentence construction to the application of critical thinking skills in the analysis of various genres of literature, with particular emphasis on the appreciation of different cultures and traditions. The use of common benchmark assessments administered throughout the school year provides data about the level of mastery of key comprehension skills for each student. This data then informs the teachers' ongoing instruction.

The writing component of the curriculum encompasses instruction and frequent practice in student composition of narrative, informative, descriptive and persuasive essays. Exemplars of well-written essays are displayed and critiqued by the students to provide concrete examples of cohesive writing. Our Middle School grades utilize classic literary novels to further develop the comprehension and analytical skills appropriate to this age group. Again, there is a focus on the appreciation of different cultures and societal norms. Through their reading, Middle School students broaden their knowledge of the world beyond the classroom and prepare to cope with the challenges of high school, college and career.

Technology is a key aspect of instruction. Accelerated Reader, Tumblebooks, Education City and other Smartboard programs and iPad apps are used to instruct, reinforce, remediate and challenge students at their level of mastery. Google Classroom allows for digital assessments and further provides the computer literacy skills critical for 21st century learners.

SFCS aims to explore mathematics with a real-life focus in mind. In order to achieve the highest standards, we build a cohesive curriculum based on the Diocesan, New Jersey, and Common Core Standards. From the earliest grades, we use a system to build a strong basis: teach a skill, practice the skill, then apply the skill in a problem-solving scenario. Learning with understanding enables students to solve new kinds of problems in the future. Emphasis on fluency within each skill is paramount for application to new situations. Additionally, our scaffolded instruction not only demands fluency of operations, but promotes a connectedness in being able to choose the appropriate skills and methods in order to solve a given problem. This encourages the employment of higher level skills.

Hands-on manipulatives are in use from the early grades through to the intermediate and even middle school

grades. Students incorporate such tools as Math Cubes to provide concrete understanding in addition and subtraction facts, and Decimal Squares to help develop connection between fractions, decimals and percents. Adapting values for Cuisenaire rods acts as a precursor for algebra and the use of variables. Anglegs are useful for recognizing types of angles. In addition to applying these commercial tools, students are encouraged to “develop and create their own original works as a means of personal or group expression,” as put forward by ISTE standards.

Technology is used appropriately to support mathematical learning with visual presentations such as with the interactive SmartBoard. Programs such as IXL and BrainPop allow students to practice and self-assess their capabilities, as does online access to the textbook used in class. Students are trained to complete assignments using Google Classroom, where they receive feedback from faculty and liaise with peers on collaborative projects. This progresses to the compiling, organizing and analyzing of data, leading them to higher-level thinking.

SFCS provides a rich Social Studies curriculum that begins in the primary grades. Our curriculum is infused with 21st century skills that enable the students to develop a robust understanding of the various cultures within our country. Virtual learning experiences also allow for a deeper understanding of global cultures. The curriculum includes civic education beginning in the primary grades with a strong focus on neighborhood and community. That concept is then used as a springboard for the older grades, whose focus is on the differences between rural, urban and suburban communities. Each grade level has a concentration on geography, history, civics, culture and map skills.

Our curriculum also provides an understanding about the essential principles and values of American democracy. The importance of good citizenship is stressed as students are encouraged to act on their civic responsibility through various school programs. Missionary Childhood Association, Helping Hands, and fundraising for a scholarship program for a student in Guatemala are just some examples of these opportunities. Added to this are the letters, cards, and good wishes our students create and send to various community groups, such as the homebound and retired veterans. Our goal is to provide the education and resources needed to enable students to make educated decisions in local, national, and global communities.

Our Science curriculum incorporates the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to put the focus on student-centered inquiry. Students are encouraged to think critically, to solve problems, and conduct investigations. We have a science lab which houses not only the middle school science program, but also materials available for use by any grade. All grades use the scientific method to reinforce and enhance the areas of study. Enthusiasm for the content is built through hands-on experimentation and observation. Recording of results creates the opportunity for cross-curricular application through collecting data, graphing, and writing of observations. Higher level thinking skills are practiced through prediction, inference, and extrapolating from the data collected. The use of technology allows the students to explore concepts that normally would not be visible or accessible in the classroom through simulations and websites such as Phet.colorado.edu. Our studies throughout the year culminate in our exciting end of the year STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) fair.

The Religion curriculum at SFCS incorporates the following concepts: Knowledge of Faith, Liturgical Education, Moral Formation Teaching, Education for Community Life, Teaching to Pray, and Missionary Initiative. The students’ religious formation begins in PreK with emphasis on learning through prayer experiences. Students receive the Sacrament of Penance and Eucharist in second grade and continue to grow in their faith and knowledge of Catholicism, culminating with the Sacrament of Confirmation in grade 8. At SFCS students are exposed to a broad range of liturgical and para-liturgical experiences such as Benediction, Masses honoring the Saints of the Church, and a Vocation Awareness ceremony where students anoint peers to celebrate their vocations of young men and women of faith. Participation in both local and global service opportunities are encouraged and a strong emphasis is placed on their moral development so that students emerge as active, Catholic leaders with a strong love of God and Church.

#### Early Childhood

The St. Francis Cathedral Preschool follows the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Early Learning Standards and the Diocesan Early Learning Standards with an emphasis on thematic curriculum. Our Early

Childhood Program recognizes the needs of all early learners and aides their development in a caring and supportive environment which highlights age appropriate content and outcomes for young children.

St. Francis Cathedral School Early Childhood program is designed for young children to achieve long-range goals including spiritual, social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth. We incorporate a wide variety of learning experiences, materials, technological equipment and instructional strategies to accommodate individual differences in all levels of instruction. Our curriculum provides interactive and multi-sensory hands-on experiences in Religion, Technology, Literacy, Mathematics, Health/Safety, Arts, Personal/Emotional growth, Physical Education, Science and Social Studies. Our program is supportive of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, which focus on the development of children's thinking, reasoning, decision making and problem solving abilities. Our goal is to employ a wide range of hands-on activities that challenge children to ask questions, create ideas and solve problems.

The Early Childhood program strengthens our children's sense of competence and enjoyment of learning. Our staff which includes certified teachers and full-time teacher aides, understand the particular ways that young children develop and learn. Communication between home and school is made primarily through the St. Francis Cathedral School classroom blogs. All classroom information and daily schedules are posted weekly.

Preschool activities boost pre-math and pre-literacy skills to prepare children for the academic demands of kindergarten. The experiences in our Early Childhood program are created to prepare children for the expectations of kindergarten and increase the development of social skills, responsibility, respect, and school pride that continues as they progress through St. Francis Cathedral School.

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

SFCS offers programs in the arts, physical education, world language and technology. Aligned with Diocesan, national and state curriculum standards, the courses contribute to the education of the whole child: spiritually, intellectually, socially, physically, and morally. These classes work in tandem to provide rich learning experiences leading to the development of our students' learning, thinking and life skills.

The Art curriculum strives to foster a love of the arts and provide a deeper appreciation of art in our world. Students from Kindergarten through sixth grade attend one Visual Arts class for 45 minutes per week. In class, students learn and demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of the visual arts. Each project presents the students with an opportunity to express their creativity and utilize their thinking and visualizing skills while developing problem-solving skills that can be applied in all subjects. Art classes integrate art production, art history, art criticism/analysis and aesthetic awareness. Students complete activities and assessments during each class which help to increase student performance in other academic areas.

Additionally, students participate in community contests and exhibits. Every year each student in first through sixth grades completes artwork for the Diocesan Respect Life Contest and the Metuchen Memorial Day contest. Select student work is showcased as part of a "rotating" annual exhibit for local schools displayed at The Annex Gallery at Metuchen Borough Hall. In this art show, twenty works of art are presented for 2-3 months. All students, their families and the community are invited to these well attended and well received shows.

St. Francis Cathedral is in compliance with the National Blue Ribbon program's foreign language requirements. Spanish is introduced in third grade, and students have Spanish class one period per week. Lessons focus on learning vocabulary, grammar, and culture utilizing a variety of materials including, but not limited to, poems, games, and songs. Students are immersed in the language by reading, writing, listening, and speaking every class period.

Students in first through eighth grades attend Physical Education classes once a week for 45 minutes. Kindergarten students are taught twice each week, for a total of 90 minutes. The curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey Standards for Physical Education. Students are expected to fully participate in class, be

prepared, have a positive attitude about new challenges, and demonstrate good sportsmanship to their fellow classmates. Each class begins with prayer, aligning this area of the curriculum to the school's Catholic values.

Teachers of other curriculum areas collaborate with the Physical Education teacher on various activities, thus guiding the children's "making the connection" among these subjects. For example, when students focused on soccer in Physical Education, the children heard a story about Brazil in the Library and learned a Spanish song in Music, designed passports for the countries where soccer is played in Art class, and researched Brazil and South America in Technology class. Finally, the World Language teacher taught the students to pray in Spanish, as well as create presentations about "Dia de los Muertos", which was celebrated in Physical Education class in the beginning of November. This cross-curricular approach to learning is most beneficial to students as they navigate their way from one subject to another, seeing the continuity in their other classes, and relating what they have been taught to other areas in their lives.

Technology at St. Francis Cathedral School is viewed as an effective and necessary teaching and learning tool, capable of enhancing both the communication skills and productive capacity of our students, faculty, and staff. Research, evaluation, implementation, and assessment of new tools are ongoing at SFCS. The school strives to employ methods of 21st century instruction that integrate research-proven teaching strategies, current learning technologies and real world resources and contexts.

The Computer Lab is outfitted with 30 Dell Optiplex A3030 Touchscreen desktop PCs, with resident and online software to meet technology and subject curriculum requirements. The Technology teacher and students also have access to an interactive whiteboard, scanner, two network printers and two 3D printers. All students in Kindergarten through eighth grades attend Technology class for one, forty-five-minute instructional period per week. Lessons adhere to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards for Technology and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students.

In Technology class students build age-appropriate skills in the areas of word processing, spreadsheets, presentation design and development, Internet research, digital citizenship, coding, video production, audio recording and editing, website design and 3D modeling. Students use Google's G Suite for Education (formerly Google Apps for Education) to create and submit their work where appropriate. Over the course of a student's tenure at our school, he or she will progress from basic drag-and-drop mouse skills to problem solving and bridge design.

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

St. Francis Cathedral School's mission statement drives our instruction. Following the Diocese of Metuchen guidelines, which are aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, teachers work to help meet the needs of all students. St. Francis Cathedral School recognizes that each student is unique and requires different academic supports. Teachers target different learning styles across the content areas to provide rigorous and engaging methods of instruction. A variety of teaching methods are implemented in the classroom such as small group and differentiated instruction, kinesthetic and project-based learning, whole group instruction, and learning centers. These different classroom experiences allow students to be actively engaged in their learning, and give each child an opportunity to do his or her best.

by a content-specific teacher. In the middle school, classes are completely departmentalized, and mathematics and science classes are leveled by ability. This allows for even more differentiated instruction and smaller class sizes for students who need reinforcement. A smaller student to teacher ratio provides more time for one-on-one instruction and allows students to learn at a pace that works best for them. The students in the advanced classes can be taught at a faster pace, thus allowing for greater depth of knowledge to be attained.

At SFCS, we realize that parents and guardians are the children's first teachers. Parents, guardians, and teachers work as partners to encourage students to become lifelong learners. Student success is a shared responsibility and parent engagement is a key factor in that success. Parents and guardians can track their child's success by accessing the school's online reporting system. This system provides them with real time grades and attendance information. In addition, electronic report cards are available for the first three marking periods, with a printed report card issued in June. Parent teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first marking period. Teachers are available to meet with parents at any time, however, if the need arises.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Saint Francis Cathedral School creates a Catholic atmosphere where children are challenged to develop respect, justice and responsibility while growing intellectually and spiritually into leaders of the 21st century. This, our Mission Statement, is the reason we exist. We not only recite it each day in school and at all school functions, but more importantly, it is lived and made visible to all who walk through the doors of SFCS. Our Catholic faith is fostered and woven throughout every part of our day. Our students lead prayers, actively participate in all aspects of school liturgies and prayer services, participate in retreats, and are engaged in service projects that benefit people near and far.

Our faith-filled environment, rigorous curriculum and cutting edge technology create an atmosphere where meaningful learning takes place. SFCS is committed to educating the whole child, spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally. We provide a positive environment where differences are respected. Our curriculum engages, supports and challenges each student to grow to his/her fullest potential. With the use of differentiated instruction, best practices, STEM/STREAM activities, iPads, touch screen computers, 3D printers, and Google classroom, all seamlessly blended into our curriculum, we support and challenge a variety of learning styles and prepare students for the 21st century.

Activities that enhance the curriculum and support social and emotional growth prepare students for real life experiences. Our Character Education program for grades Kindergarten through 5 and Advisory program for grades 6-8 provide students with the opportunity to develop the skills they need to come to know themselves and others better and to build and sustain caring relationships with one another. SFCS provides a variety of opportunities that enrich and fulfill social growth. Our STEM Club, Student Council, Drama Club, Handbell Choir, Chorus, Track, Common Room, Helping Hands club, and Service Learning club all focus on enhancing and supporting student growth.

Administration, faculty and staff are committed and passionate about meeting the needs of every student entrusted to their care. SFCS administration has an open door policy where new ideas are always welcomed. The visible interaction between administration, teachers, and students exemplifies the oneness of spirit that permeates SFCS.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Saint Francis Cathedral School is fortunate to have several methods of communication with both school families and our surrounding community. At SFCS we are particularly proud of our advanced technology and we make use of the digital world.

Our website is used as a tool

- for our families to learn about the activities at school
- to receive our digital “e-velope” of news and flyers
- to see photos and learn about the students’ activities and assignments on our teachers’ individual blogs
- to find school forms, brochures and handbooks
- to access our grading system (PowerSchool)

Additionally, our home page boasts of our students' successes as shown in print media, including Catholic Spirit, the Home News Tribune and the Sentinel. Other means for direct communication with our families are the Honeywell Instant Alert System as well as Constant Contact.

Back to School nights and the Catholic Schools Week Open House each afford parents the opportunity to visit their child’s classroom and a yearly teacher’s conference is a mandatory touch base to track student progress. Of course, teachers are always only a phone call or email away.

We are blessed with a high level of parental involvement both in the school on a daily basis (as volunteers

in our Lunch room, Library, Art room and Computer lab) and through our highly dedicated parent volunteers who comprise our Home School Association. The HSA serves as a conduit between the school and its families and directs SFCS family volunteers in our very successful fundraising efforts, most notably our Tricky Tray Event (which hosts 1,500 people, and requires thousands of family volunteer hours and hundreds of donations from local businesses). Because of these efforts we have been able to make numerous improvements to the school, mainly focusing on upgrading our technology. The HSA also hosts five meetings each year to serve as a tool for communication and enrichment for families; not only relaying information about the student and school activities, but also hosting speakers on important subjects such as study skills, spiritual well-being and more.

The newest addition to our annual events is the HSA sponsored Family Reading Night, during which our Middle School students, shepherded by our parent volunteers, present their favorite stories to our younger students. This event not only builds presentation and leadership skills in our Middle Schoolers, but also fosters a deeper “SFCS family” relationship that transcends all grades.

The students participate in events all year long that connect them with the local and global community. Over the past eight years, our school has been pleased to host award-winning visiting authors. The author visits allow the students to see how books “come alive” as each author interacts with various grade levels. In addition, last year we were able to Skype with Newbery Award winning author Avi. The Skype visit was an enlightening opportunity for students to have a question-and-answer session with this writer who has written more than 60 novels for young people and teens.

Student Council has various social justice programs that promote student outreach, including fundraising for Breast Cancer Research at St. Peter’s Hospital and Naomi’s Way, a local women’s homeless shelter. Additionally, the children raise funds to sponsor a scholarship for a student in Guatemala named Marco. He sends cards of thanks and our Student Council is working on using Skype to meet him! Other service events include a Thanksgiving Food Drive for the local food bank, the Missionary Childhood Association Walkathon, a hat and mitten Christmas drive for the needy, and our Helping Hands group that collects Halloween costumes for a local shelter. Each school year, a Patriotic Program is produced which honors our local veterans, many of whom are transported to the event from a local VA Home. The Catholic War Veterans also speak to the 5th-8th grade in an interactive assembly, sharing stories of their military experience as well as the wisdom of their age.

Currently, SFCS is participating in the Diocesan Catholic Charities pilot program which seeks to provide opportunities for students to learn about the mission of Catholic Charities as well as how to advocate for social justice. These events and activities create a student awareness of the world around them, both near and far, and further impress upon the children the key principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

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

SFCS is committed to providing high quality professional development for teachers and administration. Knowing that professional development must be an organized, sustained program, PD is offered in many forms throughout the school year.

Administrators attends annual national conferences based upon the school goals each year. Professional memberships include Learning Forward which is an organization committed to providing PD in order to ensure student success. Professional learning standards are referenced and used as guidelines for motivating staff to attain the highest levels of professional practice. Title II monies are used annually to provide PD for teachers in the form of workshops, book studies, conferences, and DVDs. Teachers are encouraged to attend multiple day conferences in the summer with the objective that they will turn-key the information during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and level meetings. Opportunities are provided for teachers to visit colleagues for peer observations in order to improve professional practice. Teacher leaders are nurtured among the levels, early childhood, intermediate, and middle school, so that caring and trusting relationships are developed.

Our in-service day during the month of May is dedicated to analyzing student data, one source being

standardized tests, which are then used to set goals for the school, classes, and individual students. Teachers work within levels to determine gaps and/or needs which then drives our goals for professional development for the following school year. Instructional DVDs are obtained from Title II funds in both Literacy and Mathematics based upon student learning needs that were determined as a result of data analysis. These provide the opportunity for faculty to learn/revise instructional strategies that support student mastery.

The strong use of technology embedded into the curriculum means that our technological needs are ever growing. The technology coordinator and the technology instructor meet monthly with administration to discuss strategies which will broaden the use of technology within the curriculum. Consequently, PD for faculty is needed to develop teachers' professional knowledge. The technology coordinator and instructor work in tandem to provide differentiated levels of PD throughout the school year. Finally, evaluation tools, along with pre- and post-observation conferences, are all used to promote professional dialogue and communities which focus on continuous improvement for both students and staff.

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

The administration at St. Francis Cathedral School consists of the Rector, Principal and Vice Principal who share common goals for faculty development, student success and a productive learning environment. We stress the development of curriculum that promotes spiritual growth, academic excellence, and social responsibility.

The Principal is a role model with a strong Catholic identity that is evident in her dealings with faculty, students, and parents. Her visionary leadership emphasizes community; she is open to concerns of parents and students, while being supportive of the faculty. High expectations are held for all in the school community. The Principal leads by example; attention is given to all in her care rooted in the values of the Gospel. In recognition of her spiritual and academic leadership, she received the "Diocese of Metuchen, Distinguished Educator Award" in 2007 at the "Spotlight on Catholic Education Awards Ceremony."

The administration encourages teacher leadership through active roles in Professional Learning Communities and school committees. Our teachers collaborated to develop a Character Education Program for grades Kindergarten through grade 5 as a response to a perceived need in the school community. This was modeled upon our current Middle School Advisory Program, which is reviewed and revised by our Middle School Team yearly. The administration and the faculty work collaboratively to review and update materials and resources, both textbook and technology, and evaluate school policies that have a direct effect on our students. The administration listens to teacher suggestions to build sound strategies that lead to success for every student.

The administration encourages faculty members to offer professional development to other educators internally and they make substantial contributions within our diocese. Our Technology Coordinator offers professional development through Diocesan Tech Talks; our Vice Principal and Middle School teacher offer professional development through Good God Choices, a diocesan created bullying program. The Technology Instructor and Technology Coordinator meet monthly with administration to plan for faculty technology workshops, which are offered as needs arise with the growing technology program. Our technology liaisons, who are faculty members that act as points of contacts within the various levels (middle school, intermediate, early educators), willingly work with colleagues to assist with individual technological faculty needs.

Maintaining a positive working relationship with stakeholders is a priority for administration. There is ongoing collaboration with our School Advisory Council (SAC) and Home School Association (HSA) so our work together will ensure student success. The Principal and Business Manager meet monthly to guarantee adequate resources are included in the budget, with an emphasis on funding for professional development and technology.

The Principal and Vice Principal attend national conferences yearly to stay abreast of best practices which ensure student success. Our Principal is a working member of the Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC)

within the Diocese and acts as a regional representative in sharing and making educational decisions. The Principal served on a diocesan committee which consisted of attending a week-long conference to develop and implement technologically-driven classrooms within the Diocese. Additionally, she served on the Diocesan Steering Committee of the new Diocese of Metuchen accreditation with AdvancEd.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The Saint Francis Cathedral School community is committed to developing students intellectually and spiritually into leaders of the 21st Century. The varied strategies that are employed ensure the success of each student while meeting the diverse academic and socio-emotional needs of a vibrant school.

## 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?      \$5752  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$1700

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      2%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      4%

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

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** Terra Nova 3

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	643.9
Number of students tested	47
Percent of total students tested	98
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	671.5
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	696.2
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	97
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	718.1
Number of students tested	39
Percent of total students tested	97
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	736.8
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	724.4
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	653.1
Number of students tested	47
Percent of total students tested	98
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	677.7
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	678.5
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	97
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	701
Number of students tested	39
Percent of total students tested	97
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	704.7
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** 2016

**Test:** Terra Nova 3  
**Publisher:** CTB/McGraw Hill

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

School Year	2015-2016
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	710.5
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
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:**