

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2018 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. Margaret R. Williamson

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

Official School Name Saint Mary's School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 946 Hopmeadow Street

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

Simsbury CT 06070-1819  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hartford

Telephone (860) 658-9412

Fax (860) 658-1737

Web site/URL  
http://www.stmarysschoolsimsbury.org

E-mail smsoffice@stmarysimsbury.eduk12.net

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. Michael Griffin

E-mail michael.griffin@aohct.org

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

District Name Archdiocese of Hartford Tel. (860) 242-5573

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 Mrs. Sarah Mutarelli

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) 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
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	4	9	13
<b>K</b>	6	7	13
<b>1</b>	5	8	13
<b>2</b>	8	12	20
<b>3</b>	3	7	10
<b>4</b>	12	7	19
<b>5</b>	13	11	24
<b>6</b>	12	10	22
<b>7</b>	8	10	18
<b>8</b>	12	16	28
<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>	83	97	180

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88 % White
  - 4 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 3%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	205
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 2

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
3 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 13:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2012	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
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 2017.

<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.

To ignite spiritual growth and promote academic excellence within a nurturing faith community. United together, we inspire students to know, love and serve God.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Founded in 1957, Saint Mary’s School (SMS) is a Catholic parish elementary/middle school in the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the State of Connecticut. SMS attracts families from sixteen towns in the Farmington Valley and beyond. Towns in the valley, from which the school draws, range from suburban to rural. Families include those with one or two working parents and single parent families. While most families own their homes, there are also families who live in rental properties. The families who make up the school community are representative of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The common characteristic of the families is a desire to provide a faith-based education for their children with the expectation that students will also excel in high school and matriculate at the college or university level. These commonalities produce the culture of faith, learning and service for which SMS is known.

SMS celebrates a number of traditions. Each year the eighth grade students participate in a “buddy” program with the pre-kindergarten students. The school sponsors a Senior Citizen Thanksgiving luncheon for up to 200 guests where parents prepare the meal, students serve the lunch and also provide entertainment to the elders in our local community. Each Wednesday during the school year, members of the seventh and eighth grades help to serve lunch at the local senior center. The seventh grade participates in a personal and leadership development program called Right of Passage Experience (ROPE) to help promote the students’ leadership and interpersonal skills in preparation for their leadership roles as eighth graders. The Christmas pageant entitled “Lessons and Carols” is another much-loved and anticipated tradition. Students from kindergarten through eighth grade participate; each contributes in memorable ways to this yearly event. There is also a strong tradition of parent involvement in the school. Parents volunteer in the classroom to help with projects, to read to the younger children, and to serve hot lunch to the children. In the older grades parents assist the teachers in specific tasks from fund raising for activities to ironing costumes for the Christmas pageant.

SMS bases its academic philosophy on the premise that all students can excel and are empowered to exceed their own expectations of themselves. This begins in the pre-k and continues through the eighth grade. There are several key strategies involved. One important facet is that teachers work and collaborate together. They consistently share best practices and projects as well as information regarding student achievement during their weekly professional learning community time. The 1:1 iPad program has allowed a blended personalization of learning and enables students to proceed at a rate that is appropriate for them.

SMS follows the Archdiocese of Hartford curriculum standards and is also very intentional about elevating the learning to be relevant and applicable to real-world situations. For example, when it comes to science instruction, teachers are very mindful to include interesting web sites and to integrate Catholic social teaching with a local and global lens wherever possible. Science comes alive for the students through their experiments and demonstrations.

In addition to meeting the curriculum goals and following the standards, each lesson and class activity is infused with opportunities to help students develop socially, emotionally and culturally. Teachers create differentiated lessons, allow for work in pairs or groups, and help students who need it. No lesson is without ways to encourage personal growth and the recognition that God is present in each person. This year the school initiated a coding program beginning in kindergarten. As a hands-on activity, this has allowed students, at all levels, to learn a 21st century skill and has challenged students of all learning styles to learn in a new and critical way.

The arts are celebrated at SMS and recognized as a vital component to the development of the whole child. In addition to the voluntary band program, all students participate in the vocal music and fine art programs, which encourage personal and academic growth and skill development.

Recently, SMS has partnered with a local agency to assist students with cognitive or other learning challenges that go beyond simple academic tutoring. In addition, the teachers provide support to students by arranging extra help sessions before school and during lunch. The “lunch bunch” concept is accessible to all

and encourages students who might otherwise not seek assistance to become more accountable for their learning.

Another key strategy that encourages students to develop their full potential in every way includes active collaboration between parents and teachers. Students benefit from close communication between parents and teachers through regular blog posts, email, phone and personal meetings as needed. No student goes through SMS without the benefit of being raised by the school community.

In addition to the daily curriculum, there are numerous extracurricular activities that help students to grow and that promote the spirit of community. These include Art Club, Drama Club and Physical Education (PE) Club. Students may also participate in school sponsored sports teams including soccer and basketball.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

SMS follows the Archdiocese of Hartford Curriculum Standards, which include overarching essential questions and enduring understandings for each discipline in each grade level. The Standards integrate a global perspective, with an emphasis on moral education and community service. With this as a guide, SMS seeks to challenge all students to meet and exceed the standards as a path to educate and foster each student's academic potential, and prepare them to become participating, virtuous citizens of their local civic community.

The Social Studies Standards have four pillars: civics, economics, geography and history. Beginning in kindergarten the children are taught basics of government enhanced by the tenets of Catholic social teaching. Whether it is understanding the option for the poor and vulnerable or learning about care for the planet, all students participate in this learning. Students vote for the Student Council officers as part of their civic engagement in school. They also participate in many service opportunities to help people in the community. This culminates in a required service program in grades six through eight which also includes a reflection paper each year on the meaning of the service that the student chose.

All language is conveyed through the spoken or written word. In reading/English language arts, students begin acquiring their foundational skills as early as the pre-kindergarten (pre-k) program. This program cultivates a desire for knowledge and freedom for creative expression. In kindergarten through grade eight, there is the interdisciplinary development of all of the language arts skills from phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary development, to reading comprehension, fluency, and communication skills. Critical thinking is fostered to develop students' abilities to access and understand information, evaluate its quality, collaborate, and convey ideas to others.

In the elementary grades, the students' reading level is assessed three times per year and close reading assignments are differentiated based on the reading level. In this way, all students can move at their own pace and individualized goals can be set for students. In the middle school students read in multiple ways, using literacy to collaboratively engage to make meaning and act upon their world. Students use a variety of texts to accomplish this including classic literature as well as contemporary works, and self-selected choices. When applied in cross curricular units, the learning becomes meaningful and relevant to the students.

Writing happens every day in a multitude of ways. A spiraling approach is used so students continuously revisit the standards and progress from early writing stages to the development of more sophisticated essay writing. The students delight in being able to put their thoughts on paper and are thrilled when they can read them aloud or see their work displayed. By the fifth grade, students are truly writing a variety of essays in every discipline. In the middle school, students are prepared and confident to meet the high benchmarks set. Students are encouraged to explore various types of essays, allowing for mastery of the writing process.

SMS focuses on the development of mathematics skills from pre-k through grade eight. The Standards are such that the four domains of number theory, measurement, geometry and data analysis/statistics and probability are woven into each grade level. The students approach math from the perspective of solid acquisition of basic skills and fluency for the purpose of math application in the real world. The Rigor and Relevance Framework is emphasized. Through teacher-initiated efforts and implementation, a local approach to mapping the curriculum lent to in-depth discussions and strategies at each grade level and positive results for all students.

In the discipline of science, SMS is committed to elevating science to an interdisciplinary experience for every student. The Standards state that students should understand concepts and develop abilities of inquiry. In addition, there is an emphasis on writing, critical thinking and technology integration. In engineering units in science and math, students learn how to identify real world problems, ask relevant questions, and are encouraged to submit creative solutions. Teachers of the primary grades engage the students in the exploration of topics in a hands-on approach. This includes making models and using their iPads to access

web discussions of many varied topics. STEM skills and the application of 21st century fluencies are further emphasized in the middle school. As often as possible, hands-on experiments are brought into the classroom so that students' curiosity is tapped and experimenting is encouraged. Students build, explore, and problem solve using technology to further develop ways for research and inquiry.

The early childhood curriculum is developed with four core domains: physical growth, social emotional development, intellectual growth and religious development and is aligned with the K-3 Standards. The children learn a great deal through purposeful play time. Their social and intellectual skills are further developed through lessons conducted during circle time. By fostering creativity and excitement about learning and by facilitating a stimulating environment, the child's innate desire to learn is nurtured. Units are designed recognizing the multiple intelligences of children and learning styles. Teachers strive to create learning experiences that provide the youngest learners with opportunities to discover, explore, question, and succeed. Those students who matriculate in SMS's kindergarten program are well prepared especially in math, literacy and social skills.

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

At SMS the goal is to develop the whole child through a variety of curricular experiences. Each child is valued as an individual. Essential academic and social skills are often developed through other curricular areas. Reading, mathematics, science, and social studies all have a role in the other curricular areas and make the subjects come alive for the students. Students often develop talents that they did not know they had and enhance their self-esteem and confidence through these learning opportunities.

The arts are essential and vital to human existence and to SMS's commitment to the education of the whole person. At SMS all students participate in a visual arts program once a week. The teacher instructs the students in basic techniques using masterpieces of famous artists. As a result, the students are able to stretch their skills and appreciate fine art work. Through the arts, students gain a greater understanding of their own cultural heritage, as well as a sense of the larger world community. All students also participate in an engaging once per week vocal and performing music program that includes a mixture of sacred and more popular music. Instruction in the basics of reading music enhances the students' ability to perform songs accurately and provides them with a skill for life. The opportunity exists for students to choose to participate in choir in addition to music class for their enjoyment and to enhance their skills.

SMS provides for a voluntary band program beginning in grade three. Many students participate and work hard to learn their instrument and perform at school and with select music groups in the Archdiocese. Some students also participate in the drama club after school, which helps students learn the basics of theatrical performance and public speaking. Finally, the seventh and eighth grade students all participate in "Shakesperience" for ten weeks during which they prepare a play and create the set for a shortened version of a Shakespearean play.

Physical education (PE) is an integral component of the education of the whole person. All grades participate in a PE class developed using the Archdiocesan Physical Education Standards that are tied closely to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Grades pre-k through five meet twice per week and grades six - eight meet once per week. The study of PE serves to allow SMS students to come to a deeper appreciation for their bodies and knowledge of how to keep their bodies fit. Nurtured by the experiences of exercise, play, and sports, the goal of the PE program is for students to engage in the process of life-long physical fitness.

Health and wellness are critical components of both the PE and the Science standards and curriculum. Students are taught about nutrition and healthy living habits. As part of the development of the whole child, students at SMS are taught how to live balanced, active, and healthy lives.

The study of world languages is an integral part of the students' day at SMS. Saint Mary's School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements. All students study the language of Spanish. Students from pre-k through grade five participate in one lesson per week as an introduction to the language.

In middle school, students have Spanish instruction four times per week with the goal of achieving the content of a first-year high school curriculum.

At SMS technology, library and media are integral parts of the curriculum. Students are introduced to all three as early as pre-kindergarten through the use of the Smart Board, software and library class. In kindergarten through grade eight students use their assigned iPads for curricular lessons, projects and enrichment. Library classes are scheduled through grade six and teachers use media on a daily basis. Whenever possible students create books and complete projects using media as well. Technology is fully integrated into all disciplines and there is an emphasis on digital citizenship and ethical use of technology.

Students in grades k through seven are learning how to code on a weekly basis using small robots and software. Students are given problems to solve or goals to reach and use coding to accomplish the tasks. The benefits include improved cooperative learning, problem solving, understanding various coding techniques and achieving goals.

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

The individual student is the focus at SMS. Regardless of the size of each class, the teachers and aids come to know each student and how they learn. The first goal is to provide differentiated instruction based on each student's level and need. In the lower grades, students' reading levels are assessed three times during the year using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA®). Goals for the students are reformulated and personalized based on the assessment. For students who are surpassing their goals, the teacher provides higher level material and for those who might struggle, more reinforcement instruction is planned. Students who meet their goals continue on the path to improvement. Groups and centers are primary methods for instruction at this level and teachers assess progress through whole class assignments and individual meetings. The personalized approach allows for teachers to implement tiered interventions.

In the middle school the students are grouped according to ability in mathematics and literature. These groupings are based on prior achievement, knowledge of the student and performance on standardized tests. In this manner, students who are on or above grade level are able to be challenged and all students can have more personalized reinforcement. In the remaining disciplines, the teachers provide differentiated instruction by challenging some learners with more complex concepts and by working individually with those who struggle. Morning tutoring sessions are available regularly and students often use their lunch time to catch up, reread a test or get assistance. The teachers are approachable and it is common to see them working with individuals at any point in time. Students who are not performing are not allowed to slip through any cracks. Teachers monitor homework completion and assessments and work with parents and students to help students meet academic goals. Through the school portal, students and parents are able to see the progress of students in grades four through eight at any time.

Student performance is assessed in several ways. Pre-tests are given routinely to assess depth of knowledge of a concept before instruction begins. This data enables teachers to establish initial differentiated plans. Formative assessments are used on a daily basis to monitor student progress. Summative assessments are given at the close of a unit of instruction. By virtue of effective formative assessments, most students meet with success. If a student is still struggling with concepts, rather than move on, re-teaching follows and the student is given another opportunity to demonstrate evidence of knowledge. Students are often given the choice of the form of evidence for assessment.

The school has a good working relationship with the local Department of Pupil Services. When necessary, educational evaluations can be scheduled when there are academic concerns about a student and intervention at the school level has not met with success. Every effort is made by the school to understand the learning needs of the student and to try to provide accommodations and modifications when necessary. In addition, the school has cultivated a relationship with a local agency who provides intensive tutoring or coaching for students as needed. Results of these interventions have been overwhelmingly positive.

The Iowa Assessment® is a norm-referenced assessment given to students in grades 3-7 in late April to measure achievement and growth across a continuum. A close look at this data is conducted collaboratively

annually. The data sheds light on relative areas of strength and weakness in programs and allows for adjustments in curriculum and instruction.

Noteworthy are the weekly professional learning community (PLC) sessions that take place. There is a direct correlation between fidelity to the PLC practices and the increase in student achievement the school has experienced. Teachers attribute student achievement to their planned collaborative discussions using data and in-depth discussions of instructional strategies.

SMS continually seeks to maintain a high level of rigor and achievement. Students are presented with high expectations from simple routines to applying their learning to real world concerns. The school-wide goal is always to take students where they are, bring them to where they need to be, then challenge them to stretch themselves to recognize a potential within themselves they may not have realized they had.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

SMS engages and motivates students by welcoming them as individuals into the community. Each student is known by name and valued as a person first. The principal and teachers meet the students in the morning at the bus and car pool drop off, not only to provide for their safety, but to greet them and transition them from a home mind set to a school mind set. During the course of the year, each student will have had the opportunity to help lead the morning prayer; the principal and pastor greet and encourage students at that time. Motivation is an outgrowth of feeling welcome in the community and is further enhanced by the classroom teacher who provides a cheerful welcoming environment.

Throughout the day there are opportunities to help develop the whole child. Students interact with office staff when dropping off morning “mail” and are treated with respect and encouragement. Behavioral expectations during passing time help to develop proper social skills. Personal contact with teachers, lunch room staff and the principal at lunch and recess help to promote emotional well-being and social development. Often the smallest interactions yield the most benefits.

In addition to the required teacher evaluation process, the principal meets one-on-one with teachers and aids to seek input and to get to know them as individuals. These meetings take place during the school year and during the summer. Teachers have stated that they feel supported when the pastor and principal spend time with them and the students, before, during and after school. Teachers are encouraged to bring suggestions to the administration and often those are implemented. Currently, there are faculty meetings twice per month in addition to the weekly professional learning community sessions. Usually the principal is available to teachers for about an hour before school. This is an excellent time for the principal to check in with them and help them sort through concerns that they might have.

A testament to the school culture are the teacher led PLC sessions. This is highly valued. Teachers use this time in a meaningful way to examine data and discuss individual students. If a student is struggling, discussions center on strategies that have worked successfully for that student. If a student is experiencing behavior changes, teachers explore what is happening in the life of the child. As a community, teachers teach all the students; students learn from all the teachers.

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

At SMS the most important thing to do is to engage the family from the very beginning in the life of the school. This begins with personal attention during the admissions process and continues through to enrollment and school year engagement. Every effort is made to connect with parents to find out what motivates them to choose SMS for their child and then to develop ties with the child as teachers discover their gifts and talents. Personal attention through phone calls and personal emails helps to keep families engaged. Opportunities to volunteer at SMS are another way the school engages families. These include helping at lunch time, raising funds for the Home School Association, coaching and running clubs, to name a few.

SMS has a longstanding, high level of engagement with the local Senior Center. Students volunteer on a rotating basis to assist with lunch weekly. Through the annual Thanksgiving luncheon in school, the students and parents serve as many as 200 senior citizens.

Since SMS is a parish school, there are strong ties with the Parish. Students serve at Mass and, on holy days of obligation, the school attends Mass with the parishioners. Whenever possible, school activities and announcements are included in the weekly bulletin. The principal serves as lector twice a month and occasionally speaks at Masses to promote the school.

Currently, SMS has an arrangement with the local Catholic high school that has allowed two students to take advanced math (beyond Algebra I) at the high school. The two schools have coordinated class

schedules to make this plan work. In addition, students visit the high school and are welcome at all of their public events.

Many parents work in companies that donate funds to the school based on the parents' volunteer hours so SMS is a well-known school in these companies. SMS also works with local businesses such as a local market that provides all of the hot lunch meals weekly.

Parents and the community are informed of student academic achievements through a regular weekly blog that is posted on the web site and available to all. Parents also have access to the teachers' daily blogs, class websites and parent portal to keep them current with class activities and status of assignments. The Church bulletin, local papers, Twitter and Facebook are other avenues for sharing achievements of students and alumni.

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

When educators learn, students learn. SMS is fortunate to have several avenues for professional development. The Archdiocese schedules two days per year on topics that are based on input from teachers and administrators and aligned with best practice goals and methodology. Regular work is done updating Archdiocesan academic standards and teachers are included on these committees, so there is coherence between the Archdiocese and the individual school. In addition to that, teachers are encouraged to attend other workshops based on their goals and needs. The principal makes information available to teachers about various workshops and teachers are encouraged to suggest workshops that will meet their needs. The Middle School Language Arts teacher has attended an in-depth workshop at Columbia University for two years in a row and uses the information gained regularly. Since the school purchased new iPads this year, the emphasis is currently on effective use of iPads in the curriculum. This year all faculty have participated in two full days of Apple training and groups of teachers have attended two other workshops related to the iPads. Two teachers have spent significant amounts of time learning coding techniques so that they can instruct kindergarten through grade seven. One teacher has also achieved her Apple Educator certificate.

Teachers mentor one another in various ways from sharing assessment techniques to classroom management. Several teachers and the principal are engaged with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to serve on school evaluation teams. In turn, they are able to share best practices with the staff.

Student learning and success is not merely a philosophy, it is lived and shared school-wide. This is evident in the teachers' willingness to gather and share information for the betterment of teaching and learning. The culture is such that teachers share information and advice on a daily basis. This is enhanced through the PLC structure and through the practice of having grades pair together for certain projects. Teachers and students are able to improve their learning and share their expertise as has been demonstrated during the second and fifth grade project on the United Nations, buddy time between grade eight and pre-kindergarten and service projects involving grades one and three.

Recently a group of teachers and staff proposed that the school examine its recycling procedures. This suggestion was embraced by all and a major recycling effort was begun. The school community engaged with the local refuse company to learn about recycling and everyone is working together to take better care of God's creation.

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

Even though the school would appear to have a hierarchical leadership structure, in practice it is a shared leadership approach. The pastor and the principal function as a team and communicate regularly about what is happening at the school. The principal has established a shared leadership model with the teachers and staff so that their input is sought and valued. For example, the calendar for parent teacher conferences has been adjusted to include evening sessions instead of just afternoon sessions based on discussions with the teachers and parents. At the suggestion of the teachers, a new module for the student information system was leased to make lesson planning easier. Both of these examples demonstrate a focus on student

achievement by allowing better parent communication and by allowing teachers to use their time more effectively in the planning process. During bi-monthly faculty meetings items of importance are discussed. For example, it was decided to bring back the tradition of participation in the Knights of Columbus spelling bee. This was a collective teacher decision.

The strengths of individual teachers are highlighted. The upper and lower school team leaders consult with, and are consulted by, the principal on a regular basis on issues regarding everything from scheduling to assessment of students. Teachers attend Pupil Placement Team (PPT) meetings with the principal so that realistic accommodations can be planned for students in need. The Middle School team leader handles the schedule and many other matters that pertain to those grades. The team leader in the lower grades engages teachers in discussions and plans to make the most out of the students' early education years. The PE teacher knows the students very well since he also coaches and runs after school activities. The principal and the PE teacher address certain types of behavioral issues together. He is a valuable resource because of his experience with team building and developmental milestones.

The principal also has a strong working relationship with the SMS School Board and its many committees. Significant achievements have occurred for the benefit of students through the Technology Committee, the Advancement Committee and the Finance Committee. Students have benefited from new iPads, increased awareness of the school in the community and careful monitoring of the school's finances. In addition, the principal is working closely with the parish on a major construction project that will include shared space between the school and parish.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The primary reason for student success at SMS is differentiated instruction. The effectiveness of this strategy is positively enhanced by the learning and social community of the school. As early as pre-kindergarten, the learning style and previous knowledge of the students are assessed and accounted for as the teachers plan their lessons. As the learning demands become greater, reading assessments and formative assessments form the basis for instruction. Students at SMS represent a broad range of abilities, prior knowledge and learning styles and their teachers consider how best to make adjustments in content, process, product and learning environment to maximize the education of each child. The differentiated instruction along with the emphasis on getting to know each child creates an environment where children receive the instruction that they need with the goal of achieving the highest level possible for each child.

Whereas teachers will account for content and process in the learning for each child, they will also adjust the product as needed. This ranges from personalized spelling lists to achieving the next grade level in math. A particular strength of the school is in creating engaging and effective learning environments for the children. The compact nature of the school allows for a variety of environments. Students can easily be sent to work in pairs or small groups immediately outside of the classroom. Teachers provide for different learning styles by allowing students to move about or stand to work if that is effective. Groupings of desks are changed regularly allowing for different groups to work together. Teachers are constantly monitoring the effectiveness of the differentiation and making shifts and changes as necessary. At SMS differentiated instruction benefits all students, not just those who struggle and those who excel. The students in the middle are able to achieve much more than they think they can simply by having their needs met.

## 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?      \$8075  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$3095

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?      34%

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

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** ITBS

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** 2012

**Publisher:** Riverside

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	75
Number of students tested	18
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	73
Number of students tested	25
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	77
Number of students tested	23
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	78
Number of students tested	14
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	75
Number of students tested	30
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:** N/A

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 3  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	82
Number of students tested	18
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	81
Number of students tested	25
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	71
Number of students tested	23
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	75
Number of students tested	14
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:** 2012

**Test:** ITBS  
**Publisher:** Riverside

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:** Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	80
Number of students tested	30
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:**