

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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
PreK	25	41	66
K	18	17	35
1	23	16	39
2	22	9	31
3	19	24	43
4	30	25	55
5	16	21	37
6	18	28	46
7	22	20	42
8	20	20	40
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	213	221	434

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 6 % 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: 1%

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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	0
(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	463
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

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

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

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
15 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>4</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: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 15:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2012	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	96%	97%	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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2012

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

SFX promotes service and compassion, educating the whole child in a faith-based environment by honoring the gifts of its students in their many forms.

PART III – SUMMARY

St. Francis Xavier is a thriving Catholic school educating preschool through 8th grade students from Wilmette and the northern suburbs of Chicago. School families value the role of engaged and motivated teachers within a stimulating environment that prioritizes lifelong learning, faith development and the formation of informed and compassionate individuals. The school was founded in 1910 and draws inspiration from a rich legacy of faith in action. SFX calls students to make the world a better place by promoting a culture of care and concern in service to others. The school cultivates curious learners through a framework of academic excellence, faith tradition, collaboration and innovation in which students are known and honored for their gifts in their many forms. SFX families form a tight-knit community that enriches the school through service, regular and meaningful collaboration with administration, and authentic support of faculty, programs and traditions. Because the school operates in a well resourced public school district, faculty works diligently to craft a rich and diverse curriculum to remain competitive with area schools.

Students are continuously reminded of their responsibility to develop their talents to “be the best they can be” as articulated through the school’s Crusader Covenant, calling students to lead with integrity, serve community, put faith in action, and live in harmony with others. Homeroom teachers regularly draw on diverse expertise and certifications to enhance student outcomes, including Masters Degrees in Social Work, International Relations, Business Administration and Reading. Three years ago, SFX launched an annual “Respect Each Difference” (RED) campaign that leverages perspectives from speakers across the U.S. and the world to build bridges of understanding. The year-long event is rooted in a community-read and author visit linking themes to Language Arts curriculum where they are further developed through classroom dialogue. This year’s RED campaign focuses on exploration of world cultures, and the school welcomed an African dance troop and author Caitlin Alifirenka (“I Will Always Write Back”) to campus to open eyes, hearts and minds.

St. Francis Xavier is a proud recipient of the 2012 Blue Ribbon Award. This milestone inspired the school to articulate and advance the very culture and character that precipitated its recognition, and led to a nomination for a Chicago Innovation Award in 2016. SFX thrives because it collaborates and innovates frequently and well, despite facilities that make differentiation and depth of curriculum a challenge. Blue Ribbon recognition inspired the school to develop a strategic framework that celebrates these characteristics, and guides lesson planning and cultural vocabulary. EPIC (Explore, Play, Invent, Create) was born in 2013 to fuel student curiosity and problem-solving skills and to provide a strategic platform for our technology initiative within the greater context of motivated learning and creative problem-solving. A technology integration specialist was brought on shortly thereafter to create opportunities for students in the areas of coding, robotics, maker ed and critical thinking.

EPIC draws students out of their comfort zones, and inspires faculty and parents. While an 8th grader may access EPIC through the school’s Biomechanics and Prosthetics Club, a preschool student does so through engagement with Imagination Playground. Teachers participate in collaborative PD workshops to share best practices, knowledge of tools and apps, and cross-curricular resources. School families support this culture of innovation and curiosity through the parent-established “Make an EPIC Difference Fund,” raising over \$200,000 to connect teachers with elite professional development experiences, including engagements with the Center for Transformational Educational Leadership through the University of Notre Dame, service opportunities in Africa, continuing education at the Teachers College at Columbia University, and workshops at the M.I.T. Media Lab’s Center for Future Children.

Blue Ribbon also helped spur the school’s appetite for a transformative campus improvement project through its capital campaign, “Faith in Action.” Currently, much of the school’s differentiation and the faculty’s work happens in hallways, foyers and even oversized closets. Additional collaboration spaces, an expanded gym, and a new library will allow SFX to further explore a deep and nuanced curriculum that fuels excellence.

The school engages the community through meaningful dialogue with neighbors, Village leaders and

Northshore area educators. St. Francis launched a Neighborhood Relations Committee this year and communicates with the Village of Wilmette and the extended community with great frequency. First responders and area veterans are recognized at special annual liturgies. This year's "One Author, One Community" initiative partners SFX with the Highland Park public school district to collaborate on a visit with "Lemonade Wars" author, Jacqueline Davies. The annual initiative is a conduit for community outreach with partnerships through the Public Library and SFX's sharing school, St. Thomas of Canterbury. RED connects St. Francis learners to writers, artists and speakers, encouraging curiosity for all the world has to offer and establishing relationships with members of a vast global community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

SFX curriculum is dynamic and student-centered, developing the whole child to prepare students for success in high school and beyond. Curriculum is aligned with Illinois State Teaching Standards, Chicago Archdiocesan Standards, and 21st Century Learning Skills so that learning benchmarks are achieved and surpassed. SFX educates learners through a diverse PreK-Middle School curriculum and partnership across grades yield rich learning experiences. Curriculum flourishes through the oversight of a dedicated Early Childhood Director and, new in 2013, a talented Middle School Director.

Math teachers employ flexible grouping in grades 3-8 through quarterly diagnostics to advance math skills and support learners. Students are placed into three new math classes at the start of each quarter to leverage targeted teaching strategies. 5th-8th grade content includes number and operations, fractions, geometry, algebra, measurement, data analysis and probability. A significant number of 7th and 8th grade students attend accelerated high school math programs. Placement into high school math has increased as SFX has implemented flexible grouping and differentiation.

Science instruction focuses on inquiry and experimentation. Over the past five years, SFX has adopted the New Generation Science Standards, making science more hands-on. K-5 teachers focus on wellness and nutrition, energy and natural resources, ecosystems, meteorology, prehistoric periods, earth and space, and the human body. 6th-8th graders meet daily in the lab, supported with sophisticated experimentation through a rigorous science fair project. Students hypothesize, manipulate variables, interpret data and identify findings. Research is performed on iPads, projects are judged by a panel, and winners compete at regional competitions.

Social Studies instruction brings history to life through critical topics and time periods. Teachers host a mock immigration to Ellis Island and a walking tour of Wilmette. By embedding tangible experiences into curriculum, students learn lessons grounded in significant historical locations. 5th-8th grade curriculum focuses on Western civilization, world cultures and U.S. History. The Illinois state and U.S. Constitution exams are highlights, as well as a 7th grade trip to Springfield, IL and an 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C.

SFX meets the needs of young readers and writers by providing ample opportunities to build comprehension skills and develop as writers. Over the past two years, the school has employed the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Reading and Writing in K-5, instituting an overarching literacy curriculum. In the past three years, St. Francis has added Reading Specialists to support literacy in a more intentional manner. Learners are supported across all grades as specialists provide the wrap-around services required for continued growth. Literacy activities address various learning styles and engage readers in multiple methods of instruction and practice. Students participate in 90-minute literacy blocks including small-group instruction, independent reading, reading aloud with partners, and listening to reading. Teachers integrate Jennifer Serravallo's Reading and Writing strategy lessons into planning and students refine comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary expansion.

K-4 students work with words to master developmental phonics and spelling skills rooted in the systematic approach of Donal Bear and Shane Templeton in "Words Their Way." Phonics and spelling skills in PreK-2nd grade are supported by Jolly Phonics and Michael Heggerty through individualized instruction. K-2 teachers employ a word mastery program on Dolch sight words through a home-school program. In grades 3-4, student-led literature circles emerge with teacher-led instructional guided reading groups. Students are supported with mini-lessons surrounding themes and comprehension strategies and apply them across genres. Teachers integrate a wide variety of literature, spanning modern and traditional to fiction and non-fiction.

Middle School engages thought-provoking novels and independent reading where novels are differentiated to meet the needs of smaller groups. Goals include mastering diverse formats while writing across curriculum. Grammar, editing, vocabulary and spelling are integrated within writing instruction and

experiences. Class discussion, multimedia activities, book talks, library support, and author visits bring literature to life. Workshops with the Chicago Shakespeare Company provide cultural context, performance experience and even sword-sparring instruction to 8th graders just beginning to unpack the complex works of Shakespeare. A love of reading is the overarching goal as students continue to develop comprehension and analytical skills.

Preschool curriculum emphasizes pre-reading skills through sound recognition and phonemic awareness, number recognition through discovery and play, independent play to foster imagination and independence, and guided play to develop social skills for healthy relationships. Students explore God, nature and science through discovery activities, and emerge with the scaffolding for a successful Kindergarten transition. Teaching aligns with K-3 curriculum, promoting a continuum of letter and number knowledge, spiritual awareness, and a wonder for all the world has to offer. Students “graduate” with a platform of knowledge exceeding Archdiocesan standards and fostering a love of learning to last a lifetime.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Collaboration is a defining SFX characteristic. Practiced through technology, music, visual arts and library, it’s transformative for students’ ability to learn, grow and shine. The library partners with teachers to cultivate a love of literacy. The art room and EPIC Studio, home to tech and out-of-the-box thinking tools, are stationed adjacent to the library to promote project-centered dialogue. Prolific collaboration includes Little Bits art projects, author visits supported by visual arts contests, and storytelling-meets-tech through iBook animated shorts. The library is a hub of activity where students acquire research skills, find guidance in “just right” selections, and develop reading skills through the Blue Stem Challenge and Global Read Aloud Project. Partnership with a cohort of authors invites new ways of thinking while building capacity for empathy as listeners and learners. This fall’s 8th grade Battle of the Books team won the Illinois state title, proving further linkages between literacy and successful outcomes.

In the past five years, technology integration has been a focus across curriculum. With the launch of EPIC in 2013, SFX created a niche for a specialist to move students from consumers to creators. Through classroom EPIC hours, collaboration across grades, and project-based innovation, this transformative role prepares learners for careers that don’t yet exist by encouraging curiosity, maker-skills, digital citizenship and a relationship with emerging technologies. Partnership with Shedd Aquarium has yielded SFX teams in the annual Underwater Robotics competition. Robotics sequences with legos, coding, and tech tools spanning Beebots to 3D printing engenders curiosity for how and why technology exists to benefit humanity. 2016 participation in the Global Day of Design brought K-8 students together to invent something to benefit the school: teams brainstormed, tinkered with models and crafted presentations. Collaboration across curriculum has yielded a range of authentic learning experiences, including a field trip around augmented reality, pH sensors and geographic mapping tools last year to explore a baseball field that was formerly a cemetery destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire. iPad carts, SMART Boards, Google Chrome Books, and a 1:1 iPad Middle School initiative support student-centered methods to encourage creativity and critical thinking. Digital portfolios, collaborative digital projects and worldwide Skype relationships are but a few examples of how technology has transformed learning.

Physical Education has flourished over the past three years and is now supported by a second PE teacher. Curriculum highlights the benefits of movement and play and teachers weave these cues into classrooms, including “brain breaks” that get kids jumping and moving between lessons. Parents have rallied behind the connection between physical wellness and learning readiness and installed a turf field three years ago. PE space has doubled, and students enjoy increased opportunities for unstructured play and team building. K-8 students meet for PE twice per week.

The arts are a conduit for self-discovery, and faculty provides exposure to “safe” risk-taking that builds confidence. This fall, one of the school’s two music teachers performed in an understudy role in the Lyric Opera of Chicago. By remaining flexible to growth opportunities, St. Francis empowers teachers to promote curiosity and model life-long learning. Visual arts curriculum has collaborated with performance art through Art in Action Days instituted in the past four years, inviting graphic notetakers, spray paint artists and improvisational performers to lead workshops. Arts instruction is provided weekly to students in PreK-8.

5th-8th grade students rotate art and music quarterly in single-sex instructional settings.

SFX School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements. Language is explored through the study of Spanish in PreK-5 and Latin in 6th-8th grades. Students meet twice per week with the Spanish teacher, who promotes Spanish-immersion through dialogue, music and interactive exercises. Weekly blog updates allow families to support instruction at home through online resources. Latin meets four times per week and makes connections to socio-economic and political historical contexts, with projects including the construction of a domus to better understand Roman living conditions and the opportunity to excel through Certamen and the National Latin Exam. Students graduate with a sturdy foundation in romance languages, positioning them for success in high school language acquisition.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

St. Francis configures its facilities to address the developmental needs of students, and to enable more thoughtful groupings to support student and faculty collaboration. Taking a cue from the successful independent school model, SFX engages students through its Early Childhood (Preschool-K), Elementary (1st-4th) and Middle School (5th-8th) programs. Since winning the Blue Ribbon Award in 2012, the school has expanded its administrative team with the hiring of a full time Assistant Principal, a Middle School Director and a Communications Specialist to support the needs of a vibrant school population.

Regular assessments ensure that SFX remains student-centered and responsive. Beginning in 2016, students in grades 3-8 take the Aspire Test. Aspire is a national, standardized assessment tool produced by the ACT, the most widely administered college entrance exam in the state of Illinois. Aspire is linked to ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The test covers english, math, reading, science and writing and is designed for students in grades 3-8. Aspire is one of many tools utilized by St. Francis to monitor student progress and better understand areas of strength and opportunity with regard to student needs.

Formal review of testing results is undertaken by the learning behavior specialist and Principal, and a trend analysis identifies themes spanning multiple years. The specialist creates a "watch list" informed by Aspire scores and progress monitoring data. Teachers are notified of special needs and a detailed plan for support and growth is established for at-risk students. Analytical results are presented to faculty, shared with the Pastor and school leadership, and disseminated to parents through a report that draws conclusions and recommends action by grade level and discipline. Testing results also identify opportunities for enhancement within curriculum.

Progress monitoring happens three times per year in the areas of reading, math and language arts to measure performance and growth. K-4 students, for example, are assessed using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System in November, January, and May to determine instructional and independent reading levels. Students are placed in flexible, guided reading groups based on their reading levels and literacy needs. This method supports struggling readers with developmentally-appropriate texts, while also challenging advanced readers with higher-level texts and more advanced strategies.

Instructional methods are tailored by age and socio-emotional developmental stage, and are supported by the school's social worker. The Middle School Director meets regularly with subject teachers to provide guidance specific to not only curriculum but also developmental needs of young adolescents. In grades 5-8, daily, single gender advisories paired with an adult advocate serve as a "safe" haven. Advisors "loop" with Middle School students from grades 5 through 8 in order to develop a relationship that supports the social, emotional, spiritual and academic growth necessary during these critical years. Students also meet in these single gender groups for a weekly formation class to deep-dive into topics including study skills, social/emotional resources, executive functioning, friendship and goal setting. Arts instruction happens in small, single-gender classes where students are more comfortable taking risks. Teachers take these opportunities to inspire students to embrace the arts.

Primary grade students in need of academic support based on progress monitoring in reading and math are provided opportunity for additional practice with the appropriate specialist. Students falling below the 10th

percentile nationally using Curriculum Based Measures (CBM) assessment receive intensive instruction with the learning behavior specialist. In the Middle School, subject-specific faculty support students requiring differentiation from regular reading curriculum as identified by Aspire performance and daily progress monitoring. Early Elementary learners benefit from intervention from the speech therapist and learning behavior specialist where appropriate. SFX frequently communicates opportunities for District intervention in support of Early Childhood students.

Assessment data help pinpoint opportunities for individual student improvement, and have led to programs such as “10th Period,” an after school tutoring/study group program. Assessment review also shapes overarching curriculum goals. Teachers refine and adapt curriculum and design instruction to ensure success into the next grade level. These tools have heavily influenced efforts to provide increased tiers of support and differentiation in math and reading.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

SFX thrives because its engaged and motivated community works together as one body. Faculty is committed to knowing and honoring students, and teachers partner with families to cultivate gifts and close learning gaps. The Principal emphasizes celebrating moments of joy, instilling a culture of gratitude, and modeling Christ’s love through service to others. Students are held to high academic and moral standards, and teachers feel called to participate in the formation of individuals who are aware of their gifts and their responsibility to use them to make a difference in the world.

Teachers draw on multiple and diverse degrees and certifications to enhance learning and emotional buoyancy. A first grade teacher, for example, regularly leverages her degree in social work to guide students as they navigate conflict resolution and goal setting. The Middle School’s single sex advisories, formations periods, and special opportunities including the 6th grade annual team-building/outdoor ed experience at Covenant Harbor ensure faculty remain responsive to challenges brought on by normal academic and social stressors. Outside speakers, including last year’s workshops by Dr. Michael Thompson, keep students, parents and teachers engaged in healthy dialogue with the best interest of students in mind. A dedicated school social worker supports students through moments of difficulty while also identifying proactive resources to encourage emotional health and well-being.

Teachers know the love and support of parents and each other, and this culture of care and concern is critical to the school’s success. New faculty members are paired with a mentor for support and guidance. Regular communication with administrators and the confidence that comes from their support is engendered through weekly updates, team planning meetings, access to elite professional development experiences and classroom resources, an open door policy in the Principal’s Office, and routinely scheduled workshops and conferences. Teachers convene regularly through social and professional development opportunities. At an event three years ago, teachers were organized into teams, each given \$100, and told to “spread joy” across Chicago over the next two hours. This winter, SFX purchased a Fitbit for every teacher so that faculty may take part in a supportive fitness challenge.

Parents demonstrate teacher appreciation through monthly lunches, recognition of teacher birthdays, the Teachers Light the Way and Holiday Funds, the celebration of a “Faculty Feast” and a catered holiday party. A Helping Hands network aids school families and faculty during moments of personal challenge.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

SFX student success is directly correlated to the role families play in the school’s vibrancy and longevity. Parents touch every aspect of school operations: leadership and volunteerism, fundraising, academic support and service. As such, SFX seeks to honor and engage families in numerous ways. Alumni are invited back for reunions, a field day event is celebrated annually for graduating high school seniors, a Grandparents’ Day event welcomes guests for a morning of classroom visits and liturgy, and “graduating” 8th grade families are honored at a special dinner. The Principal encourages positive communication through spontaneous phone calls home to celebrate small victories—whether it be kindness shown to a classmate or academic successes. Parents know of the school’s gratitude for all they do for its teachers through regular and meaningful communication.

Community engagement comes to life through a partnership of combined resources. Examples include author events shared with the public library and last year’s trip to the state capital for the Illinois Computing Educators Conference, where SFX students advocated for innovative tools and practices in Illinois classrooms. Throughout the year, SFX families come together to serve under-resourced neighbors: with an annual rummage sale, through fundraising for a school in Haiti, and with tutoring services and donations of supplies for families at St. Thomas of Canterbury in Chicago. SFX shines brightest when engaged in service to others.

The school works closely with the surrounding neighborhood and the greater Wilmette community. Increased differentiation and breadth of programming over the past five years have precipitated the need for new and expanded spaces. Teams of parish and school families have come together to collaborate with neighbors and Village officials to produce a campus improvement plan that will enable future students to grow roots and thrive. To date, families and friends of the school have responded by raising nearly \$8 million in support of the SFX capital campaign, "Faith in Action." The school community won a unanimous vote through the Village Zoning Board of Appeals and the Village Board of Trustees. SFX is grateful to be recognized as a vibrant force and a positive voice in Village efforts to recruit engaged and active families to the Wilmette area. Together, strong schools and invested community leaders create the foundation for healthy and compassionate neighborhoods. Student achievement is celebrated with the Wilmette and greater Archdiocesan community through the media and in acts of service and civic collaboration.

3. Professional Development:

St. Francis Xavier Administration sets professional development as a top priority and continuing education as an expectation of all faculty members. This practice benefits students through the application of fresh ideas and the implementation of best practices, and also serves as a critical teacher retention tool. Motivated teachers who wish to better themselves are grateful for the opportunity to invest in their own development and to bring that learning back to their colleagues at SFX.

All teachers receive a \$1,200 annual stipend to support their own professional development. This academic year, SFX and its Principal began a two-year partnership with the University of Notre Dame's Center for Transformational Educational Leadership. This relationship extends numerous all-school PD and coaching opportunities to our learning community. Over the past several years, faculty have participated in the Erikson Institute/Archdiocese Early Childhood TEC Mentor Program, the Archdiocese of Chicago Early Childhood Leadership Academy, the NAEYC Conference, the AMLE National Conference, Educators Camps including Nerd Camp, and more.

This past summer, teachers traveled to MIT's Media Lab/Center for Future Children, Columbia University's Teachers College, the University of Notre Dame's ACE Program, the Pacific Coast Literacy Institute, and to responsive classroom conferences across the country. Professional development encompasses service learning models, including service and learning through an orphanage in Tanzania. SFX teachers stretch and grow, rejuvenating their own curiosity and openness to new ways of seeing the world. This impacts messages and themes woven into classroom conversations in powerful ways.

St. Francis teachers and administrators lead and serve through professional development experiences, expanding their networks in the process. New relationships and shared best practices gathered in the field are implemented in classroom learning experiences back at SFX. The school's technology integration specialist serves on an elite Archdiocesan "innovative tech coach" team tapped to train and lead across nearly 200 schools. Teachers serve and learn through partnership with forward thinking organizations including the Alliance for Early Childhood and the Family Action Network. Insights from professional development experiences are shared through monthly all-faculty workshops and best practices are diligently and thoughtfully implemented across Preschool-8th grade classrooms. The result is a robust faculty retention rate, teachers who feel inspired and rejuvenated in their calling, a high degree of expertise across faculty, and students who remain engaged and excited by the injection of new ideas and out-of-the-box instructional methods.

4. School Leadership:

St. Francis Xavier leadership models innovation, responsibility and community with the success of its students foremost in mind. Stemming from its prior Blue Ribbon win and with the promotion of a new Principal the following year, SFX has capitalized on its progressive momentum through a culture of innovation. The school formalized a three-tiered organizational structure with the hiring of a passionate Middle School Director in 2013. Beginning in 5th grade, dialogue and learning opportunities reflect an increasing level of sophistication and personal responsibility. Parent-teacher conferences include students

to teach advocacy skills, and management of classroom communications shift from parent-focused blogs to student-managed apps and resources to promote high school readiness.

Innovation is a hallmark of SFX leadership. In 2012, the school hired a specialist to build a communications framework allowing teachers, parents and administration to maintain professional and easily-facilitated dialogue. This strategic change allows administration to share information that supports student learning at home, promotes safety, shares successes, and builds community. Flexible learning spaces are carved out of limited facilities: an outdoor classroom emerged last year through the construction of custom benches encircling mature trees outside Middle School halls, and an EPIC Studio and reading specialist work space were created several years ago by transforming oversized hallways into bright, open-concept learning centers. Teachers frequently transform roles where improved student outcomes meet personal teaching development goals. Several homeroom teachers, for example, have evolved into floating specialists to address areas where students demonstrate need for depth and differentiation.

Faculty models personal responsibility and demands the same from students. Administrators and teachers take time out on a daily basis to conference in informal settings when a critical teaching moment calls for compassion, tough love or celebration. St. Francis draws on its identity as a Catholic school to develop students of superior character and to cultivate school leaders who uphold high moral standards.

Community is valued and supported through the school's leadership structure. The Principal participates actively with all members of the school's learning community, partnering with the Pastor to set policy, meeting monthly with School Board and HSO (Home School Organization) Leadership to accept counsel and provide updates, and convening with faculty regarding planning and student wellness. Faculty and parents participate in a myriad of committees with the goal of building community, advancing learning outcomes, funding school programs, and providing service to others.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

SFX developed its EPIC framework in 2013 to promote the spirit of Exploration, Play, Invention and Creativity within its learning community. EPIC lends these themes shape, scope and purpose so that faculty can make intuitive connections between mission, curriculum, and the desire to engage and inspire students of all ages. Students ladder these tools and moments back to their school’s mission and values, making concepts “stick” and migrating learning to a higher level.

EPIC calls Educators and Parents to Inspire our Children by working as a team. When teachers and parents are engaged by a strategic learning framework, the entire community benefits—not only students. EPIC invites children to innovate and grow in ways that reinforce leadership, school ambassadorship and integrity—paired with a sense of responsibility. Teachers are motivated by opportunities for professional development and resources that bring innovative learning experiences into classrooms.

EPIC yields success through collaboration of parents, students and teachers. Teachers apply for grants from the Make an EPIC Difference Fund. This parent-founded fund enables resources to support sustainable programs across a range of disciplines. Teacher proposals are submitted in: Faith & Leadership, Exploration & Inquiry, Movement & Play, Creativity & Collaboration in the Arts, Invention & Critical Thinking, and Professional Growth & Development. These programs infuse innovation into the school’s DNA. SFX has benefitted from the RED campaign, an annual Poet-in-Residence program, EPIC equipment and family playtime scheduled during winter months, access to groundbreaking tech tools, and a partnership with faith-based schools that builds bridges of understanding across Muslim, Jewish and Christian student populations.

EPIC is unique because of its intrinsic ability to connect the dots between the importance of play and innovation and the need to frame the development of curious learners within the values of the greater learning community. It grounds forward-thinking principles and learning opportunities in values to help nurture leaders with a conscience, and the selection of careers driven not only by interest and talent but also by compassion. Evidence of EPIC’s success is plentiful. In addition to an overwhelming family response to the Make an EPIC Difference Fund, SFX has also noted the impact to recruiting and retention efforts. New families cite EPIC as a key attraction that demonstrates how St. Francis puts values into action through learning. EPIC reinforces the benefit of Catholic education through obvious connections between values (the hallmark of a parish school) and a progressive education.

PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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? \$7715
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$299

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

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 7%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	416
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	420
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	421
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	428
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	431
Number of students tested	41
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	432
Number of students tested	39
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	54
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	421
Number of students tested	38
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	424
Number of students tested	45
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	425
Number of students tested	42
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	426
Number of students tested	41
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT, Inc.

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	428
Number of students tested	39
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: