

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Laraine Meehan

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

Official School Name Our Lady Of Mercy Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 25 Fremont Avenue

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

Park Ridge NJ 07656-2099
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Bergen

Telephone (201) 391-3838

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E-mail melogan@olmacademy.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Margaret Dames

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

E-mail damesmar@rcan.org

District Name Archdiocese of Newark Tel. (973) 497-4000

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. Valerie Kohn

(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

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	15	22	37
K	14	16	30
1	12	11	23
2	10	11	21
3	15	17	32
4	19	16	35
5	17	17	34
6	10	20	30
7	22	26	48
8	25	23	48
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	159	179	338

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 56 % White
 - 16 % 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.

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	367
(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):
Chinese, Creole, German, Italian, Korean, Polish, Spanish

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

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

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
49 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>15</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>29</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</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: 22

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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
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 17:1

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	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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. 2011

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

The Academy strives to meet the needs of its diverse community: spiritually, academically, emotionally, and socially. It affirms Christian values and fosters love of learning.

PART III – SUMMARY

Located in Park Ridge, New Jersey, Our Lady of Mercy Academy (OLMA) is a Roman Catholic community of learning that educates preschoolers through eighth grade students. OLMA serves an ethnically diverse suburban population who reside in twenty-one Bergen County communities and twenty New York towns.

Originally staffed by the Religious Teachers Filippini, the school officially opened in 1951 in the Sisters' convent. OLMA has evolved from a parish school, to an interparochial school, to its current academy status.

September 1975 saw the addition of a prekindergarten program, one of the first of its kind in the area. During the 1980s, reading enrichment and art programs were established; a formal literature curriculum was introduced; a full-day kindergarten program was begun; computer education classes became part of the core curriculum, and a formal guidance and counseling program was initiated. In 1991, OLMA received Middle States accreditation for the first time. The Academy has since been reaccredited in 2001 and 2011.

Recent decades have seen the establishment of a special education department directed by the school psychologist, and the appointment of three instructional coordinators to ensure the continuity of an integrated curriculum throughout the grades. To facilitate instruction, the school has purchased laptops and i-Pads for student use. It has also installed SmartBoards in every academic classroom, and has made two portable SmartBoards available to special area teachers. This year OLMA purchased sixteen Chromebooks and scheduled training workshops for its middle school teachers. Next year, all middle school students will own and use a Chromebook as a learning tool.

OLMA is dedicated to the safety and security of its students. To ensure that safety, the school has purchased and installed closed circuit interior and exterior cameras, and a buzz-in system to announce visitors. For added protection, ground level windows were coated with a bulletproof sealant, and interior doors were equipped with drop down security shades, which are used during lockdown and shelter-in-place drills. The Academy also installed panic buttons directly linked to the Park Ridge Police Department in seven strategic areas of the school.

OLMA values the uniqueness of every child. It strives to meet the needs of each child spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and culturally. This belief forms the cornerstone of the school's mission statement. OLMA continues to believe that although students may learn differently, all students can learn. Based on that belief, it has established resource rooms and has employed teachers who differentiate instruction in reading, language arts, and mathematics. It has also established honors programs for gifted and talented seventh and eighth graders. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students who excel in mathematics and science qualify for participation in a weekly STEM enrichment class.

Along with differentiated instruction, the curriculum embraces project-based, problem-based, and blended learning. Although project-based learning is an essential component of every subject area, it is foundational to the science curriculum, which includes a yearly science exposition for every grade level. With the implementation of Chromebooks in the middle school, both project-based and blended learning will become standard instructional practices.

Over the past seven years, OLMA has grown into a widely-diverse school community. This diversity is valued, celebrated, and highlighted through school assemblies, service projects, ethnic celebrations, and academic studies.

The school psychologist addresses the emotional health and well-being of students through individual and small group meetings. He oversees the special education program and also serves as a resource for parents and teachers.

The partnership that exists between the Academy and its parents is vital to the school's operation. It also fosters a sense of community and provides the students with a model for positive social development.

Since receiving Blue Ribbon status in 2011, several changes have occurred. The school has witnessed a notable shift in the diversity of the school population. OLMA has become an ethnic mosaic by absorbing the multicultural populations of New York Catholic schools that have closed.

Citing the Academy's Blue Ribbon status on the OLMA Website, on social media, and in print advertisements has cultivated a greater awareness of the school. This distinction has helped to attract a broader audience of potential new families.

Curriculum and instruction have been impacted by the increased importance of technology to the learning process and environment. The Academy recognizes this and has placed a greater emphasis on the integration of technology into daily instruction.

OLMA has always valued professional development and recognizes its obligation to provide its teachers with opportunities for educational growth. In an effort to keep pace with an ever-changing world, OLMA has increased the allocation of funds for this very important endeavor.

The school leadership has not changed nor has its philosophy. The principal continues to strive for academic excellence in an environment that nurtures the needs of every student.

Catholic schools enlist and engage their parents because community is central to their religious core. Our Lady of Mercy Academy has always relied on the participation of its parents. An observable change has been the increase of working parents, which has impacted the number of available volunteers and has challenged the school to create new avenues for building community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum at OLMA in all subject areas is comprehensive, concept-driven, and it encompasses both reinforcement and enrichment opportunities. The needs of students who learn differently are addressed through both resource room and collaborative instruction between classroom teachers and the school's special education department. OLMA contracts other professionals to address speech articulation, expressive language, and occupational therapy. OLMA recognizes that a strong, sound foundation in core concepts leads to learning success. The school curriculum follows the guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Newark and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Additionally, mathematics and reading/language arts curricula are aligned to the Common Core Standards.

The reading/ English/language arts program at OLMA in the primary grades is skill-based. It comprises English grammar, word study, spelling, phonics, listening skills, comprehension/analysis, and oral/written communication. The reading program is literature-based and differentiated through grade four. Along with reading skill instruction, the program consists of a separate phonics and spelling/handwriting component. Trade books and nonfiction literature anchor the reading program at every level. In grades five through eight, the reading program focuses on the study of literary elements, literary genres, and vocabulary development. Students who qualify take honors literature at grades seven and eight. Learning how to conduct and report research begins in grade six and culminates in grade eight with a formal research paper connected to another academic discipline. A weekly writing lab for kindergarten through eighth grade students forms the basis for the Academy's developmental writing program. Through this program, students are taught how to write to a specific audience and for a specific purpose.

OLMA places a strong emphasis on its mathematics curriculum. Students study mathematics a minimum of one hour a day. The school day was lengthened to accommodate this additional time. The mathematics program focuses on number sense, basic facts, computation, and problem solving. Concepts of graphs, time, money, and geometry are programmed elements of study. Each lesson contains an algebraic component and real-life application of concepts taught. Students develop a specialized vocabulary, and practice their basic facts in a separate weekly math drill class from kindergarten through eighth grade. At the seventh grade level, students study pre-algebra in an honors or core pre-algebra class. Similarly, eighth grade students learn algebra in an honors or a core algebra course.

Life, earth and space, physical science, environmental studies, science inquiry, and technology form the OLMA science curricula. Specialized vocabulary is introduced and encouraged in each branch of study. Students in grades three through eight apply the scientific method in a weekly science lab class, which incorporates STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) projects and activities. This culminates in an annual full school science exposition. Third, fourth, and fifth graders who are gifted in mathematics and science are invited to participate in a weekly STEM enrichment program. Middle school students are required to purchase a grade level appropriate subscription to Science World, which is incorporated into their course of study.

The social studies curriculum encompasses history, civic learning and engagement, and grade appropriate concepts. It includes geography, map and globe skills, and the interpretation of data. At the primary/intermediate levels, students study early communities and their evolution to present day. The different cultures that make up the fabric of our country are recognized and discussed. The students study the branches of government at every level: local, state, and federal. They are made aware of their responsibilities as citizens and of the privileges they enjoy as a result. A weekly current events lesson in every grade keeps students abreast of timely topics and issues. Students in grades preschool through sixth are required to purchase a grade level subscription to Scholastic News, an age appropriate classroom newspaper. Seventh and eighth grade students use the Internet and local newspapers. At the fifth grade level, students study the geography, histories, and cultures of the Western Hemisphere as they pertain to American history. Our sixth grade program includes the study of ancient civilizations and Europe during the Middle Ages. Students in the seventh and eighth grades delve into the history of the United States from its early

exploration to the present. Real and virtual field trips make history come alive for OLMA students.

Preschool Summary

Our Lady of Mercy Academy offers a five-day, full day, preschool program for four-year-olds. Our preschool provides an environment where students can develop an enthusiasm for discovery, an excitement for learning, and a passion for creativity. Core subject areas include letter recognition and formation, reading readiness, number recognition and application, social studies, science, and religion. Art, music and movement, technology, physical education, and library story time are part of the preschool experience. Teachers use the SmartBoard and student i-Pads in individual, small, and whole groups to deliver instruction. This comprehensive preschool program guarantees kindergarten success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Religion at Our Lady of Mercy Academy is a daily subject to be learned and lived. Through study, prayer, and service, students are encouraged to put their faith into action. Under the direction of their classroom teachers, students sponsor one major service project at every grade level. In addition to these, the Academy has dedicated its mission collections to funding scholarships for students from our twinning parish school in Vallieres, Haiti. As leaders of prayer, eighth graders conduct morning and afternoon communal prayer. Students also participate in liturgies and prayer services throughout the year.

OLMA believes that what mathematics is to the mind, art and music are to the soul. The art teacher gives students the opportunity to learn about different artists, to explore media, and to create their own mini works of art while practicing various art techniques. The weekly forty-minute lessons are layered; every student experiences the opportunity for creative expression, from the simple to the complex. Art instruction moves the child from forming simple line drawings and patterns as a preschooler to the graduate who creates a self-portrait.

Our Lady of Mercy Academy adheres to the axiom that “He who sings, prays twice.” This is apparent in school liturgy celebrations when its eighty member student choir leads the school community in song. Beginning in preschool, the music curriculum encompasses music history, voice, rhythm, movement, and notation. Like art, this weekly forty-minute class enables students to discover their hidden talents. The music teacher orchestrates and choreographs two Christmas concerts, two spring concerts, and the baccalaureate Mass. These celebrations highlight the Academy’s three bell choirs and showcase the many vocal and musical talents of our student body.

The OLMA physical education teacher begins every class with warm-up callisthenic exercises. Units of study focus on teacher presentation, rules of the game, techniques, and good sportsmanship. Classes are held in the gymnasium and outdoors, weather permitting, for forty to forty-five minutes each. Preschool and kindergarten students meet once a week. Students in grades one through four meet once a week for half a year and twice a week for the remainder of the year. Middle school students have class twice a week. OLMA students participate in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, the annual Elks Hoop Shoot, and the Knights of Columbus basketball shoot-out.

Life skills/health classes are held once a week from first grade through fourth grades. Students in fifth and sixth grades attend formal weekly health classes. All classes are thirty minutes in length.

Our Lady of Mercy Academy offers Spanish as a foreign language to its students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The Academy is in compliance with the program’s foreign language requirements. Students in kindergarten to fourth grade receive language instruction in a video-based format. From February to June, kindergarten students enjoy a once weekly forty minute class. First through fourth grade students receive language instruction twice a week for a total of sixty minutes. Students in grades five through eight participate in formal classes presented by a certified Spanish instructor. Grades five and six meet three times a week for one hundred ten minutes, and seventh and eighth graders meet four times a week for a total of one hundred thirty minutes. In addition to learning the language, students learn about the culture and traditions of Spanish speaking countries throughout the world.

The media center specialist presents weekly lessons to students in preschool through eighth grades. These include keyboarding, word processing, research, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint. A recent addition to the program is coding in the lower grades. Besides the personal computers in the media center, the Academy has purchased i-Pads and laptops for student use. This year, middle school teachers and students are being trained in the use of Chromebooks and Google Classroom. Next year, all middle school students will be required to purchase Chromebooks to use as an instructional tool. Each academic classroom is equipped with a SmartBoard, a laptop, and at least one personal computer. Special area teachers make use of the school's two portable SmartBoards.

Students in preschool through fourth grades enjoy the services of a children's librarian. The program begins with basic story time for early childhood students and progresses to formal library science classes for second through fourth graders.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Recognizing that every child is unique, teachers at OLMA rely upon best practices and multiple instructional methods to help them address the different ways students learn. Methods used throughout the grades to differentiate instruction include tiered, project, and problem-based learning. Teachers are aware of the classroom interventions necessary to address the needs of a diverse population. They also recognize that an in-depth analysis of student assessment is vital to the improvement and enhancement of curricula.

The differentiated reading program at OLMA ensures that all students from grades one through four receive a solid skill-based foundation. By applying guided and close reading strategies, OLMA teachers help their students to advance their comprehension skills. This secures the successful transition to higher level critical thinking skills required in fifth grade and beyond in all subjects. The program addresses the needs of the struggling reader, continues the development of the on target reader, and extends the learning of the gifted reader.

A multi-sensory approach to teaching at every grade ensures that students' learning styles are addressed. Manipulatives for the tactile learners; SmartBoards, i-Pads, and laptops for the visual and auditory learners; collaborative student groups for the interpersonal learners; developmental writing labs for the linguistic learners, and science labs with STEM projects for the mathematical learners are methods of instruction that teachers at OLMA employ to reach every student.

To address the needs of learning differenced students and those with individual service plans, OLMA maintains two resource rooms; designates a collaborative classroom in grades two through eight, and provides in-class support in the areas of mathematics and language arts. The school psychologist oversees the special education department, which consists of two full-time and one part-time teacher. OLMA teachers from kindergarten to fourth grade have received a minimum of thirty hours training in the Orton Gillingham intervention method of teaching reading, which is a phonetic-based approach that benefits struggling students. Within the context of the aftercare program (ASK), supervisors and high school student volunteers assist ASK attendees with the completion of their homework. Likewise, classroom teachers are available before and after school to provide additional clarification, review, and reinforcement of concepts taught. A speech pathologist and a speech and language therapist offer speech correction and assistance with pragmatic language. Bergen County Special Services offers compensatory education under New Jersey Chapters 192 and 193 to students, who based on standardized test results, require support in mathematics and/or language arts. OLMA contracts with an occupational therapist to deliver services to those students with occupational therapy needs that are noted in the students' individual service plans.

For those students performing above grade level, OLMA challenges them with opportunities for enrichment and extension. Having received a minimum of thirty hours of STEM training, all classroom teachers incorporate problem-based learning into STEM activities. A STEM based enrichment science and mathematics program is established for qualifying students in grades three through five. These once weekly classes and other teacher directed STEM projects stimulate curiosity and ignite passion in these budding scientists and engineers. Honors classes in social studies, literature, science, and mathematics are available

to seventh and eighth grade students who qualify. In partnership with Don Bosco Preparatory High School, OLMA sponsors a competitive robotics team for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

Our Lady of Mercy employs a variety of assessments to determine student progress and achievement. Student performance is one of several indicators in the analysis of program effectiveness. Publisher and teacher generated tests and quizzes assess student learning. Individual and group projects, research reports/papers, book reports, oral presentations, and rubrics are additional tools used to assess students. Yearly TerraNova standardized tests form the basis for tracking student academic growth and assessing student performance.

OLMA also utilizes assessment results to help the administration to determine the effectiveness of curricula, address curricular strengths and weaknesses, and project future planning and instruction. Each June, teachers meet to conduct these analyses.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As a Catholic school, OLMA places great emphasis on the formation of community. Faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni are all part of the OLMA family. As prayer partners to younger students, older students model positive behavior, pair off to attend Mass, and guide the little ones in creating special gifts and projects throughout the school year.

The OLMA choir/chorus is comprised of eighty students in the fourth through eighth grades. As a choir, their voices lead the community in song during school liturgies. As a chorus, they form an integral component of the Academy's two Christmas and two Spring Concerts. Also highlighted during these concerts are the school's instrumental music students who entertain their parents with seasonal selections.

The Academy's twice monthly student activity period helps middle school students discover their gifts and talents beyond academics. Conducted by the faculty, this year's clubs include cooking, chess, science, fashion, art and literary magazine, technology, knitting, guitar, board game strategies, student governing board, and yearbook.

Now in its eleventh season, the OLMA Drama Program enables participating middle school students to gain valuable experience in designing and building stage sets, acting, singing, and dancing.

OLMA recognizes its obligation to aid students in developing healthy life styles. Along with formal physical education classes, OLMA participates in the nation's Presidential Youth Fitness Program. Good sportsmanship and fair play take precedence over winning and losing during all physical education classes. Teachers encourage and model a spirit of healthy competition during OLMA's annual upper and lower school field days.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Academy introduced a series of after-school enrichment programs under the direction of OLMA teachers and qualified staff. This successful, fifteen week undertaking has included creative writing, math facts, science magic, coding, CyberKnex, volleyball clinic, stop motion animation, and set design. Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Girl Scouts, boys' and girls' basketball, girls' volleyball, and spring track are extra-curricular activities that round out the OLMA student.

OLMA values its teachers and prides itself on maintaining a supportive environment. The Home School Association (HSA) formally acknowledges its appreciation for the commitment and dedication of the school's teachers by hosting four faculty luncheons throughout the year. The organization also gifts each classroom teacher with funding for motivational materials at the beginning of each school year. The HSA often designates a portion of its fundraising dollars to supporting hard and soft instructional materials for the classroom.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Home School Association sponsors multiple events that build community. Families are invited to get to know one another by attending Ice Skating at Bear Mountain, Trunk-or-Treat, Breakfast with Santa, Breakfast Bunny Hop, Family Bingo Night, and the Popsicle Play Party. School parents volunteer time to make the Academy's various scouting and sports programs possible. Without the school parents, the Academy would not be able to provide its daily lunch program.

OLMA enjoys a strong relationship with the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus; many of the students' fathers are members. As a result, the Knights finance the yearly refinishing of the gymnasium floor; conduct an annual hoop shoot; foster community through a St. Patrick's Day dinner, a parish picnic, and several pancake breakfasts. The Knights of Columbus also present an annual one thousand dollar scholarship to an OLMA eighth grader who will attend a Catholic high school the following fall.

Since 1987, Our Lady of Mercy Academy has been a member of the DARE Program sponsored by the Park Ridge Police Department. DARE officers present a fifteen week drug awareness and prevention program to the Academy's fifth graders. They also visit every classroom to teach an age-appropriate mini lesson. The principal represents the Academy on the DARE Committee-Municipal Alliance, which raises community awareness of drug abuse and its prevention.

Local chapters of the American Legion and the Elks sponsor yearly essay competitions that focus on patriotism and/or American history. OLMA students have garnered several awards on the local, county, and state levels in both competitions.

Academy parents and the community of Park Ridge are informed of students' academic achievements through the school website, Our Lady of Mercy parish bulletin, Constant Contact, OLMA Shares, and the local newspapers: Community Life and The Pascack Press. Parents are kept abreast of their children's academic progress through PowerSchool; they are also able to communicate with teachers through the faculty portal of the school website. Teams of students volunteer to address parishioners at all the Masses on the Sunday of Catholic Schools Week. They speak of the quality of education at OLMA and thank the parishioners for their financial support. On behalf of the Academy, they extend an invitation to those present to visit and tour the school.

OLMA maintains a solid relationship with neighboring Catholic high schools. The quality of the instructional programs is evidenced by the ninety-eight percent acceptance rate at these schools.

3. Professional Development:

School excellence demands that administrators and teachers keep abreast of current educational theories and be trained in the application of best practices. OLMA believes that consistent professional development is essential for student success in an ever-changing global workplace.

The Archdiocese of Newark is committed to ensuring that all schools within its jurisdiction have no rivals in the area of academic excellence. To this end, the Schools' Office schedules periodic workshops and requires all schools to attend. These sessions have trained administrators and teachers in curriculum mapping, STEM, and the tier approach to intervention. Teachers have gained a better understanding of data-driven, standards-based curriculum through participation in the curriculum mapping workshops. The Archdiocesan STEM workshop provided OLMA teachers with additional training in this hands-on, cross-curricular method of instruction. The tier approach to intervention is in place at OLMA under the direction of the school psychologist in conjunction with resource personnel and classroom teachers. Additionally, the Archdiocesan Assistant Superintendent in charge of technology delivered an on-site, in-service training for the faculty in the use of Google Docs.

Professional Development is a line item in the OLMA school budget. It is used primarily to send teachers to various curriculum related seminars and workshops offered by private vendors. Teachers who attend these workshops share what they learned at subsequent faculty meetings. OLMA relies heavily on federal and state title money to finance in-depth instruction and training. All classroom teachers participated in a thirty hour in-service STEM training program. Teachers of primary and intermediate students have received thirty hours of training in the Orton Gillingham approach to teaching reading. This year, to advance the use of technology in the delivery and processing of information, teachers will be trained in the use of Google Suite. Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, all middle school students will be required to purchase a Chromebook to be used in the classroom as a learning tool. The use of Chromebooks by teachers and students will allow OLMA to implement other instructional strategies such as the flipped classroom model and collaborative learning.

All New Jersey certified teachers must accrue a minimum of twenty hours a year in professional development related to their discipline. The administration monitors this requirement and verifies the acquisition of these professional development hours. The Danielson Framework, as an evaluative tool, helps OLMA teachers to discover personal areas in need of professional development.

4. School Leadership:

The OLMA leadership is in compliance with the regulations established by the Archdiocesan Catholic Educational Services (ACES) led by the Superintendent of Schools as directed by the Archbishop of Newark. The pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish is the canonical and spiritual leader of Our Lady of Mercy Academy. The principal is the on-site leader of the school. Three instructional coordinators assist the principal with supervision of instruction, observation and evaluation of school personnel, and the implementation of school policies. These coordinators facilitate the dissemination of information from the administration to teachers, parents, and students. The school psychologist, who reports directly to the principal, oversees the resource department at the Academy.

The principal at OLMA bases her leadership philosophy on the idea that, “None of us is as smart as all of us.” Teachers and parents as stakeholders give input into the development of local school policies and operations. The OLMA School Advisory Board consists of professionals who advise and assist the principal in the areas of finance, marketing and development, strategic planning, and facilities. The Home School Association is the umbrella organization for parents at Our Lady of Mercy Academy. The main responsibility of the HSA is to support the school budget through fundraising. It is also vital to the establishment of community.

At OLMA, the children come first. All stakeholders recognize their responsibility to bring them to Christ, to help them succeed academically, and to serve God by sharing their talents with others. All policies, programs, and initiatives stem from this belief.

The parish priests, principal, and teachers bring Christ to life through religious instruction, communal prayer, and sacramental preparation. The entire adult community is responsible for modeling Christ to His children in words and deeds.

To ensure the academic success of all of its students, OLMA has established programs that are adapted to multiple learning styles. It has initiated policies of behavior that are conducive to a positive learning climate. The principal meets with the school psychologist and the three instructional coordinators weekly to review teacher concerns regarding individual students. They discuss possible remedies and plan a course of action.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to work for social justice. The leadership has developed a plan for incorporating service projects into the religion curriculum. Every month, one grade level sponsors a community project, which it presents to the full school community and asks for their participation.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The single most influential practice to the success of OLMA has been the development and implementation of a management system that ensures consistent delivery of instruction at every level. This system provides for increased communication and collaboration among the principal, three appointed instructional coordinators, teachers, and parents.

The instructional coordinator roles evolved from a needs assessment for a Middle States Reaccreditation. The system consists of three master teachers who are assigned reduced teaching schedules in order to oversee the instructional programs in preschool through first grades, second through fourth grades, and fifth through eighth grades. Additionally, a part-time school psychologist assumes consultation responsibilities for the Academy's learning differentiated students.

The initial reasons for developing this system were to monitor student progress, promote teaching strategies, and insure fluidity and consistency of instruction from one level to the next. Over the years, this has resulted in student growth, increased ability to address learning differences, improved standardized testing scores, and a greater awareness of and attention to the individual needs of the students.

Using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, instructional coordinators conduct classroom walkthroughs and teacher observations. Next, they meet with the teacher to discuss the effectiveness of the lesson and to offer constructive feedback. The coordinators lead monthly meetings with assigned faculty to facilitate communication regarding curricula instruction and student related needs. They also serve as a conduit for communication between teachers and parents.

The principal, school psychologist, and coordinators meet once a week to discuss individual students, their progress, and educational programs. They review classroom performance compared with standardized test scores in order to track student progress. When necessary, they develop intervention plans for students and identify areas for instructional program improvement.

Every June, the coordinators meet with the faculty of their division to review the school's most recent TerraNova scores. This session serves to analyze scores, make recommendations for improvement of instruction, and determine an area of focus for the following year's Archdiocesan Instructional Improvement Plan.

Our Lady of Mercy Academy strongly believes that the establishment of this management system has been most instrumental to its success. The system has enabled the Academy to address student needs quickly and fully, and it has led to more open communication among all the stakeholders in the school community. The Academy continues to dedicate itself to helping all its students to achieve their potential.

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? \$8630
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1560

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 1%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as:

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	90
Number of students tested	31
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	71
Number of students tested	34
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	77
Number of students tested	34
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	68
Number of students tested	49
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	77
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	82
Number of students tested	44
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	89
Number of students tested	31
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	72
Number of students tested	34
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill,
Third

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here
as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	74
Number of students tested	34
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova-Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	76
Number of students tested	49
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova-Third
Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	80
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: 2012

Test: TerraNova, Third
Publisher: McGraw Hill

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as:

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	86
Number of students tested	44
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
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: