

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	31	31	62
K	11	17	28
1	13	15	28
2	8	19	27
3	14	12	26
4	17	10	27
5	10	16	26
6	10	16	26
7	10	18	28
8	11	12	23
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	135	166	301

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 77 % White
 - 14 % 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	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	308
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

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

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
27 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</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: 17

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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 20:1

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%	94%	94%	96%	95%
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. 2008

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

Create an educated community to serve Christ and one another with integrity and respect.

PART III – SUMMARY

Community

Blessed Sacrament School is a Catholic school of 301 students, 239 in K-8 and 62 in the Early Childhood Center (ECC), fully accredited by the Virginia Catholic Education Association and with accreditation recognized by the Virginia Council for Private Education and the Virginia Board of Education. The school is in the City of Alexandria (Commonwealth of Virginia), a city of approximately 155,000 people, just south of Washington, D.C. Most students have college-educated, professional parents. The number of students needing tuition assistance has risen.

History/Traditions

Blessed Sacrament School began educating kindergarten through eighth grade students in 1949. At its peak there were approximately 1100 students taught by religious and lay faculty. There was a unique sense of hospitality and service present in the church community that was, and continues to be, reflected in the school.

In 1971, due to rising costs and decreasing enrollment, the parish community reluctantly closed the school. In 1974, the pastor and a group of parents, concerned that the needs of young children were not being served, reopened Blessed Sacrament Early Childhood Center in the old school annex building. A kindergarten was added in 1975.

The Blessed Sacrament School Early Childhood Center grew and flourished, without parish funding, with the support and hard work of dedicated parents, teachers, school board, and the ECC director. In March 1984, approval was sought and received to build a new elementary school.

Blessed Sacrament School has enjoyed steady enrollment under the guidance of three principals since it reopened in 1985 with full K-8 classes restored. The school is fortunate to have the strong support of parents, the energy of enthusiastic students, the love and dedication of talented professionals, and the continued interest of alumni.

Blessed Sacrament School is proud of its tradition of integrating service to the local and global community as a core component of the educational mission and curriculum. Each year, academic and service activities include a mix of longstanding favorites and new initiatives.

In the Fall of 2017, for example, students participated in the Leslie George Walk/Run (begun in 2005 to honor an alumna who suffered and died of an eating disorder), collected non-perishable food for a local food bank (2-3 annual food drives began in 1985), presented \$1,500 to the National Headquarters of Catholic Charities USA for hurricane relief (a drive organized by an eighth grader in response to the 2017 hurricanes), and donated school supplies for Hope for Children (new Student Council initiative). "Charity T-Shirt Days," with the cause and color of shirt selected by a different class each month, raised \$150-\$500 to donate in support of those causes.

Our graduates succeed academically in public and private high schools, with about 25% winning merit scholarships for high school study, about 50% placing into honors courses, and nearly 70% making their schools' honor rolls. Our alumni continue their commitment to service through enthusiastic involvement with local, national, and global initiatives. Many return each summer to participate in a Work Camp to repair homes for the elderly.

Key Strategies

Blessed Sacrament School holds high expectations for student learning and service. Faculty, students, and parents take the initiative to propose new endeavors to challenge and support all students. These high expectations shape instruction, differentiation, assessments, selection of field trips and enrichment activities,

school-wide initiatives, and after-school programs. The result is that our students develop strong skills, leadership, and a strong ethic of service, nurtured across all grades and subjects.

In addition to on-going academic programs (e.g., Shakespeare Festival/Renaissance Week, Science Fair, and Colonial Day), innovative learning activities are embraced each year. Examples of activities implemented in recent years include quarterly STEM Weeks, Battle of the Books, Culture Day, Odyssey of the Mind, and the House system. In Quarterly STEM Weeks (launched 2015), K-8 students, with the help of parents and faculty, experience hands-on learning activities with a common theme across all grades. STEM ambassadors (9-12 middle school students) select and plan these activities to reinforce math and science curriculum while highlighting current themes such as recycling/reuse of materials. In "Battle of the Books," fifth and sixth grade students compete against other diocesan schools in comprehension of selected books. For "Culture Day," eighth grade students research, plan, and lead "country stations" with engaging cultural activities to help K-7 students learn during a day-long celebration. "Odyssey of the Mind" is a global kindergarten-to-college program focused on creative problem-solving. Parents lead Odyssey at Blessed Sacrament as an after-school activity, and teams have reached the city, regional, and state finals. The new House system is an effort to strengthen community. Each "House" has one-third of our middle school students, meets daily, and develops incentives and activities to foster academic achievement, positive behavior, service, and leadership.

Recognizing the need for psycho-educational student support, Blessed Sacrament School has a full-time Counselor and a full-time Resource Director. The Counselor is available to the entire student body, runs small groups for students when requested by a teacher or a parent, and is available for teachers dealing with a classroom issue. The Counselor also serves as faculty advisor for Student Council (K-8). The Resource Director monitors student accommodations, supports differentiation, and supplements classroom instruction by providing academic reinforcement, organizational assistance, or reformatting of instructional material when needed.

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) actively promotes parental involvement, volunteer support of extracurricular activities, and it supplements funding for teacher/staff development so teachers may pursue continuing education. The focus of the school's professional development program is enhanced student learning, including techniques for students with special needs.

Blue Ribbon Recognition

Gaining Blue Ribbon designation in 2008 provided external, objective validation of our educational approaches and the standard of quality achieved. The recognition enhanced our sense of pride and confidence and re-energized core stakeholders: students, families, faculty and staff, and parish. Two commemorative actions after the initial Blue Ribbon recognition continue to inspire and reinforce our focus on strengthening our approaches and school community. The Student Council planted a tree symbolizing our mission of tending to the care and growth of the precious children in our school so that their future promise may be realized. Students came up with the idea, engaged a parent with relevant experience who selected a native species, and students planted it. The tree is thriving. Another symbolic action was to paint a single blue stripe along the walls in school hallways to serve as a constant reminder of the standard of excellence the Blue Ribbon represents. These two simple actions have kept our attention and focus on the school's continued evolution as a high quality, student-centered learning community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Blessed Sacrament School implements the curriculum set forth by the Office of Catholic Schools in Arlington Diocese in all grades and subjects. This curriculum is consistent with and informed by national standards (e.g., National Catholic Education Association, No Child Left Behind, and Common Core) and the State of Virginia's learning standards.

1. Reading/English Language Arts

In K-8, curriculum and instruction target skills development and acquisition in literacy (vocabulary, comprehension), technical and creative writing, public speaking, and listening, alongside appreciation of literature and knowledge of literary elements and techniques.

Instructional assistants permit leveled, differentiated instruction and small groups in reading, further supported by use of the "Fountas and Pinnell" system. The reading series contains "robust vocabulary" encouraging students to make connections to known words as they attempt to define an unknown word. Word Study strategies encourage students to learn at their own level. In middle school, classes read literature as a class and conduct engaging learning activities through which students demonstrate knowledge and understanding (e.g., a mock trial after reading Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"). Across K-8, the use of Lit Circles allows students to read at their level and learn from discussing literature in a group. Reading skills are emphasized across the curriculum, with emphasis on basic literacy, reading for content, identifying context clues; and students practice reading aloud and silently with a wide variety of resources.

Each grade emphasizes writing, both in language arts classes and across the curriculum. In middle school, writing assignments in social studies and science challenge students to apply what they learn in language arts. Classes participate in local and national writing and poetry contests, and each year some of our students receive awards.

Throughout the K-8 program, field trips, projects, hands-on learning activities, and group work allow students to experience literature and language arts at their own level and style. As a final activity, eighth graders select and perform a Shakespeare play for the school and at the Diocesan Shakespeare Festival.

2. Mathematics

In K-8, there is a strong emphasis on basic numeracy, arithmetic, and computation; multiple approaches to problem-solving; and real-world problems and applications. The curriculum includes geometry, measurement, real-world applications, and algebra. Manipulatives, technological resources, and math games are integrated across the grades to reinforce concepts, accommodate diverse learning styles, and challenge high achieving students.

Instructional assistants permit leveled instruction, differentiation, and small groups in math. In second grade, for example, an interactive math notebook is used to enhance the math curriculum and includes creating a table of contents for the notebook. As another example, fifth grade students explain math concepts in writing and present their own word problems to the class.

In middle school, math instruction is provided in smaller, leveled classes averaging 10-15 students instead of the full-size class. Most students study algebra in eighth grade, and there is strong emphasis on word problems and real-world applications. Mathematical concepts are reinforced in science (e.g., measurement, formulas, proportions, problem-solving applications) and history (e.g., economics and demographics, graphing and tables).

3. Science

Across all grades, science instruction fosters curiosity and development of knowledge and skills through observation and investigation. Integrated science curriculum becomes progressively more in-depth in each grade. In middle school, students learn increasingly complex concepts and vocabulary in Earth and environmental science, life science, and physical science involving introduction to chemistry and physics.

Many stories in the first grade reading series support science. "Plants Can't Jump" and "A Butterfly Grows" are used to introduce a study of plants. Corn seeds are planted and their growth measured. The science curriculum in second grade, for example, incorporates an interactive science notebook and "Science Spin" publication that include reading, writing, and math activities in the lessons. Building on introduction of the scientific method in grade four, fifth graders use their math graphing skills to illustrate experimental data.

Middle school students participate in "Science Fair." In sixth grade they develop an innovative idea, a scaled mock "blueprint," a three-dimensional model, and scientific abstract. Seventh graders design and conduct a controlled experiment, and their work is assessed by outside judges. Ten students represent the school each year in the Diocesan (district) science fair, and in the past 10 years several students (and the school itself) have won awards at the Diocesan level. Eighth graders complete a formal scientific research paper. Technology is integrated through video and slides, scientific equipment, and using "Discovery Education Techbook," which offers students a variety of resources to support their curiosity and learning.

In all grades, field trips and hands-on activities foster curiosity and knowledge of scientific methods of inquiry. For example, eighth graders visit Chesapeake Bay Foundation where they conduct biodiversity species-counts, test water quality, sketch indigenous plants, and learn about wetlands, green building design, and overall ecosystem health. Sixth graders go to Luray Caverns to observe and sketch natural formations created by elements and minerals they are studying. Seventh graders dissect squid and then involve their first grade buddies while completing a second dissection.

4. Social Studies/History

In K-8, there are specific curriculum targets for social studies and history to ensure that through their elementary school progression children are introduced to both the history and contemporary characteristics of their local area, their state, country, and the world. Instruction fosters acquisition of knowledge and skills on the geographic, economic, demographic, cultural/social, and political aspects of history and social studies. Differentiated instruction also seeks to develop understanding of historic inquiry and research, context, perspective/point of view, and primary source information.

In third grade, for example, students participate in a social studies project that includes learning about veteran memorials located in Washington, D.C. Students read Eve Bunting's "The Wall," infer meaning behind the text, and share their opinions. They define vocabulary words, write letters of gratitude to veterans, and work in groups to "design" a veteran's memorial. Students study the three branches of government and participate in a role-playing activity to learn about the legislative process and how bills become laws.

Middle school social studies class work strengthens reading skills with careful attention to vocabulary, critical thinking skills, and application of knowledge. There is significant attention to writing, both in a variety of essay questions and assignments. An immigration paper challenges students to investigate their family's journey to the United States. Seventh and eighth graders conduct independent projects in U.S. History supported through library and language arts classes. Eighth graders participate in teams in "Finance Park," a full-day community activity designed to simulate real-life decision making and corresponding economic and social consequences. Tests and quizzes support math by including graphs to interpret and support critical thinking and through writing prompts.

We take advantage of the vast resources available in our community and integrate field trips to government and historic sites, area museums, and special events.

b. Early Childhood Center

Blessed Sacrament School provides a vibrant educational option for children ages 3-5 in the Early Childhood Center (ECC). The "Foundation Blocks for Learning" developed by the Commonwealth of Virginia provide the basis for the curriculum to include literacy, mathematics, science, history, social sciences, and physical and social/emotional development. The program promotes a seamless system of developmental learning as children progress from the preschool into the elementary program, well-prepared to move forward.

The "Kindergarten Readiness Testing" results show that the ECC gives a solid foundation for English/Language Arts and Math skills for success in the elementary years.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The other curriculum areas also follow the curriculum guidelines set forth by the Office of Catholic Schools in Arlington Diocese. Faculty seek to exceed those guidelines through close collaboration with core subjects. In addition, the faculty in these areas teach across the whole school (preK-8) and that continuity supports a wide range of activities, support, cross-curricular content integration, and differentiation tailored for students with special talents and needs.

1. Fine Arts

PreK-8 students have art and music instruction weekly. Fine Arts teachers provide specific art and music resources to enhance the core curriculum. Art media, musical recordings, books, etc. are used by faculty and students in classroom projects and activities. Art and music teachers are called upon to enhance specific lessons and to complement school programs by providing expertise and/or resources.

Selected music examples include: design/build sets for spring musical (middle school math); study of world music and instruments (grade five - social studies); study of Renaissance music (grade six - social studies); study of Shakespeare period music (grade eight - literature); study of French and Spanish music during French/Spanish week (all students - foreign language).

Selected art examples include: study of simple machines (grade three - science); study of bugs and butterflies (grade four - science); study of radial design (grade six - math). Art classes address a range of media, tools, resources, and techniques to introduce students to the vast realm of artistic expression. Print-making, paper mache, weaving, photography, clay models, painting, and drawing are just a small number of artistic endeavors students learn during their tenure.

One of the most enjoyable and eagerly anticipated Blessed Sacrament School fine arts tradition is the middle school's performance in the Spring musical. This after-school activity is led by the music teacher as director and the art teacher as set-background-costume designer. Many parents, teachers, former teachers, and alumni enthusiastically lend their expertise and time. The fourth and fifth grade classes make up the chorus. Spring 2017's production of "The Lion King" also provided supplementary educational material to grades 4-8 on African traditions and cultures.

2. Physical Education/Health/Nutrition

The physical education teacher seeks to develop student understanding of being an active, healthy person. Physical education classes (twice weekly for K-8) give students opportunities to practice listening and social skills, team work, fairness, and good sportsmanship as they learn a wide variety of sports, dances (e.g., Zumba), and games. The physical education teacher also teaches Health to grades 4-8 once a week, featuring lessons on such topics as hygiene, nutrition, healthy social interaction and relationships, and self-esteem. The annual Field Day event places all K-8 students on teams for fun contests in their favorite PE games.

3. Foreign Language

Blessed Sacrament School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

All students in preK-8 receive weekly foreign language instruction. Students in grades preK-2 study Spanish for half of the school year, then French for the other half of the school year. These students then choose which language they will study for the remainder of their time at Blessed Sacrament School. Students in grades 3-5 study French/Spanish twice weekly; in grades 6-7, three times a week (135 minutes/week); and in grade 8, four times a week (180 minutes/week).

The students study how to speak, read, and write French or Spanish, and they also study the history, culture, and traditions of those languages. Classes have participated in written pen-pal activities, in computerized on-line chats, in making traditional foods, and in special cultural activities during French and Spanish weeks. Sixth graders have a special Renaissance Day project in which they research important historic figures and depict them in presentations, a special celebration, and banquet, using their foreign language skills in those activities.

Students in grades 5-8 participate in national French and Spanish exams. Many students receive high honors at the national level.

4. Technology/Library/Media

Keyboarding skills, PowerPoint presentations, coding, and spreadsheets are among the curriculum support skills taught by the computer teacher. Students in grades K-8 have a weekly computer class in the STEM lab, which is also available for classroom teachers for additional instruction. Students apply their technology skills across the curriculum in middle school as assignments require significant word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation skills. Selected technology examples include: use of formulas and graphing in spreadsheets (math); world language practice (foreign language); data graphs, research, slides, and videos (science); writing skills, research, and bibliography (language arts).

The librarian provides curriculum support by offering research time and bibliographic assistance outside of regularly scheduled library periods (preK-8 has a regular weekly library period). The librarian gathers and disseminates library materials to classrooms, browses professional and student periodicals for materials of interest, and orders appropriate materials as suggested by teachers, students, subject bibliographies, and other reliable sources. Selected examples of library collaboration with classroom teachers include: study of simple machines (grade three - science); research and bibliography (language arts); world geography simulation (grade five - social studies); ancient civilizations simulation (grade six - social studies).

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Teachers' high expectations drive the instructional process in order to develop knowledge and foster skills in analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and applying knowledge. Student learning is assessed in a wide variety of ways to meet students' diverse needs and to achieve instructional goals.

In both math and literacy instruction, students use higher order/critical thinking skills. Teachers ask "Why?" and "How?" to elicit deeper understanding of material and students are challenged to explain their thought process, orally and in writing. Differentiation is achieved through varied instructional methods, resources, small group work, projects, and opportunities to demonstrate learning in diverse ways. Teachers meet with students at lunch to provide extra support or instruction when needed.

Middle school students write compare/contrast essays that develop over three years. Sixth grade students write essays comparing ancient Rome and Greece to present-day United States. Seventh and eighth grade students apply comparable analytical skill to primary source documents - writings of Hamilton and Jefferson for seventh grade and writings of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. duBois for eighth grade. Essay questions in science challenge students to compare/contrast biological processes or physical forces. Activities across the curriculum challenge students to predict possible outcomes and report actual findings.

Live “performances” are a key assessment tool. For example, third graders choose a historical figure to bring to life (e.g., Abe Lincoln, Amelia Earhart, Sacajawea, Martin Luther King Jr., Frank Lloyd Wright). They demonstrate learning in their depiction of that person. The learning opportunity is easily differentiated through choice of resources used in research and latitude in manner of expression. Seventh graders describe and explain their experimental findings in formal science fair judging presentations and answer judges’ questions. We encourage them to ask the judges questions to deepen their understanding of the scientific concepts involved and to learn directly from the judges. Eighth graders demonstrate understanding of a Shakespeare play and the historic context when they bring the language, characters, and humor/drama to life in their own production. They also apply all they have learned about theater, acting, set, and directing from their involvement with the Spring musical. The whole production is student-centered and student-driven.

The full-time Clinic team enables the faculty and staff to mainstream students with challenging medical conditions. Recent examples include concussions, Brittle Diabetes, and Duchenne muscular dystrophy. The team also provides education for the school community in support of the students. For Culture Day, the Clinic team works with eighth graders to identify all ingredients featured in the cultural delicacies they are serving at each station. The Clinic then informs all families of children with any food-related issues, and then lends support at each station to ensure that all students are safe and enjoy treats that make this day extra special.

For children with special emotional needs, the Counselor, Clinic team, Principal, and teachers meet with parents to lend support. With parents’ written permission, the school communicates with therapists about students who have special emotional needs such as anxiety disorders, OCD, and/or eating disorders to share observations and strategies.

To address the needs of different learners, Blessed Sacrament School has a full-time Academic Resource Center Director. Classroom teachers confer with the Resource Director who assists in devising an appropriate plan for them in order to achieve academic success. The Resource Director works closely with faculty to implement accommodations, reinforce and differentiate instruction, and address special testing needs; and assists students and families to share study and organizational strategies.

From the very youngest to the oldest students, teachers create opportunities for all students to demonstrate knowledge through alternative assessments. Projects such as building game boards, drawing cartoons, creating PowerPoint presentations, making videos, writing poetry and plays, acting, performing music, and creating an artistic piece in sculpture, poster, or paint are some ways used to demonstrate knowledge and skill in subject areas. Faculty recognize that students have different learning styles and they encourage many modalities in demonstrating learning. Students also demonstrate their learning as they shoulder growing responsibilities within the school. For example, when eighth graders take prospective parents on a tour and answer questions, their answers reveal many specific and general things they have learned. Learning is evident when a seventh grader explains the anatomy of a squid to his/her first grade buddy while also emphasizing safety procedures with lab equipment.

Emergent readers benefit from completing alternative assessments. Tests have been altered to include more white space, enlarged print, word and formula banks, and also shortened to give students more time to display knowledge of the concept. Oral testing, scribes, readers, and specially formatted tests are provided to meet students' special needs.

Middle school math students solve non-traditional problems and also solve problems on the whiteboard, then orally explain the solution, instead of merely going through the algorithm to get the correct answer. High-achieving students are given more challenging problems, and struggling students are given reinforcement activities to help ensure they understand concepts. Faculty "reteach" material if students do not grasp concepts, and they meet students at lunch if students have questions.

Professional development activities introduce teachers to new methods or approaches to support high levels of achievement. Teachers study and discuss student performance, learn new methods, and collaborate with colleagues.

For example, Carol Dweck's "Mindset" book provided a year-long "book club" discussion to help the faculty apply strategies to instruction. Analysis of standardized testing provides information about student learning progression across grades, areas of strength and weakness, and how our students compare to the broader learning community. Teachers apply the data analysis to drive planning and teaching strategies.

Participation in activities such as Diocesan Science Fair, Shakespeare Festival, national French and Spanish exams, writing/poetry contests, and standardized testing helps Blessed Sacrament maintain a high standard of achievement. These activities provide feedback about our students' performance, their achievement relative to peers, and it provides opportunities to learn from other instructional approaches.

Teachers encourage each student to work to his or her potential with individual consultations, tailored strategies, and frequent communication.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Blessed Sacrament School's "Philosophy of Learning" is important in understanding the school's climate.

Philosophy of Learning

Children are endowed by God with an innate capacity to learn, a desire to explore and question, and an ability to understand and acquire knowledge and skills. Individuals learn best and thrive in an environment that recognizes and celebrates the unique reflection of God in each person.

Learning is gaining knowledge of God, ourselves, and the world around us. All learning is inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Children learn in different ways and at different rates. We collaborate to provide an atmosphere where all students can learn. We promote exploration and the opportunity to practice skills and strategies within a safe environment. Creativity and self-discovery are encouraged and developed in preparation for a life of learning.

Children learn through observing adults and each other. We model intellectual curiosity, demonstrate enthusiasm for learning, and reflect the love of Christ through service to others. We encourage students to become spiritual, academic, and social models for the community.

Philosophy in Action

Students at Blessed Sacrament School, from the ECC's three-year old students to the eighth graders, know that the faculty and staff truly care about them. The feeling of community and family permeates the structure, transforming a brick building into a warm, welcoming space. Many older students have been together six to nine years. In such a supportive environment, students encourage, challenge, support, and cheer for each other. Students help one another. Students are not afraid to ask questions, seek additional help, or propose new service initiatives. Teachers set a high standard for student performance - one that all students strive to achieve.

Parents eagerly assist in creating a positive, vibrant learning environment. From rallying volunteers to design and build a new playground, to serving as guest speakers, to serving as advisors in the science fair, to raising funds, the Blessed Sacrament families are united in lending their time and talent to creating an extraordinary learning environment and community.

The school's sense of community is enhanced by the parish priests whose love for the school community is evident in their presence at dismissal, assemblies, concerts, field trips, and special celebrations. The joyful participation of the priests in the life of the school is important affirmation to the students that they are a loved part of the school and parish family.

Positive morale among faculty and staff is key to the success of the school and is visible to all who enter the building. Morale is developed first through spiritual community. Faculty and staff celebrate each others' outside achievements, children and grandchildren, weddings, and travel adventures. They support each other in difficult times through prayer, financial help, meals, transportation, and words of encouragement. This bond remains strong even after coworkers leave the school. Faculty embrace learning opportunities and further study with the full support and encouragement of their colleagues.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Blessed Sacrament School's Mission Statement says, in part, "We partner with parents to prepare our students to live out Gospel values in a global society...." The school administration, faculty, and staff

acknowledge that parents are the primary educators of their children and an integral part of the school community. Parents are always welcome and volunteer in many ways in the daily life of the school: field trip chaperones, lunch room and playground monitors, room parents, leaders for after-school educational activities, athletic coaches, Parent-Teacher Organization board members, substitute teachers, science fair advisors, and guest speakers and readers.

Periodically, the school surveys parents for planning purposes. The most recent survey was conducted in the Fall of 2016. The majority of parents who participated in this survey were enthusiastic and pleased with the school, its program of studies, and its faculty and administration. Most parents believe that their children are being well-prepared as students to progress through grade school and beyond to become people of faith and contributing members of society. One area of concern voiced in the survey was difficulty navigating the school website, which resulted in the website being redesigned to facilitate use.

Parents play an important role in leading fund-raising efforts. In the past five years, after querying parents about the number of fund-raising initiatives, the decision was made to alter the fund-raising structure from many small ventures to the Annual Fund. Since its inception, participation in the Annual Fund has grown from 70% to 100%.

An illustration of parental involvement has been their enthusiastic support of the school's STEM activities. Parents serve as science fair advisors, Science Fair Committee members or judges, guest speakers, volunteers supporting STEM Week projects or Math Madness activities, hosts or chaperones for field trips to such places as the Winkler Botanical Preserve and NASA, and lead teams through the process and competitions for Odyssey of the Mind. We even have parents who remain involved long after their children graduate.

Student performance is communicated regularly to parents. At the mid-quarter mark, parents are able to view their child(ren)'s progress via an on-line portal. Printed quarterly reports are sent home in November (followed by the annual parent/teacher conference), January, April, and June. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers if they have concerns or questions at any time during the school year.

Quarterly middle school honor rolls are displayed in the school and homeroom teachers in grades 2-8 recognize one consistently hard-working student with the Saint Joseph the Worker Award. At graduation each year, many eighth grade students receive awards for scholarship and service.

Academic and other achievements are celebrated in the weekly electronic newsletter, posted on an electronic bulletin board, mentioned at monthly PTO meetings, and they frequently appear in "The Catholic Herald," the "Alexandria Gazette," and the "Alexandria Times."

3. Professional Development:

A wide variety of professional staff development opportunities are provided on a regular basis. Some topics are selected proactively as faculty anticipate area of growth. Other opportunities are pursued to help faculty respond to new issues or needs. A professional development fund in the annual budget provides teachers and staff the opportunity to attend classes, seminars, and workshops for the purpose of advancing continued professional growth and attainment of specialized degrees or certificates. The Annual Fund and other PTO efforts raise monies targeted for professional development. The principal and parent community encourage professional development not only by providing generous funding, but also by providing substitute teachers and paid leave for these development endeavors.

The focus of the professional development program is enhanced student learning, including techniques for students with special needs. Teachers participate in seminars and workshops on innovative teaching techniques. Teachers present what they have learned to faculty and they integrate it in the classroom.

Outside experts help faculty with social/emotional concerns, such as anxiety and depression, eating disorders, physical disabilities, and relational aggression to better understand how these affect children and their learning. Likewise, we often invite outside speakers to help faculty and students draw inspiration

from personal experiences. We invited a parishioner who lost use of arms and legs as a result of an auto accident, now a successful attorney, to share his inspirational story. We invited an astronaut who shared his NASA journey, complete with nine rejections before his successful selection on his tenth try. His message was simple: “never give up on your dreams.” The following year the middle school students visited NASA in Greenbelt, Maryland. These opportunities inspire and motivate faculty and students to maintain high standards and expectations.

On- and off-site professional development has included the following conferences/classes: Learning and the Brain, Enriching the Brains of Young Learners, Curriculum Development and Instruction, Foundations of Multicultural Education, Learning through Literature, Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Social Emotional Brain Development, Algebra for Teachers in K-6, Social Emotional Development of Preschoolers, Reading in the Content Area, Introduction to Gifted Education, Adolescent Literacy, Math progressions across the K-12 curriculum, Word Study, Teaching a Growth Mindset (based on "Mindset" book and work of Carol Dweck), National Science Teachers Association Conferences and National Science and Engineering Symposium, Eating Disorders, ADD/ADHD/OCD and other anxiety-linked learning challenges, First Aid and CPR.

4. School Leadership:

Blessed Sacrament School has thrived under the leadership team of the parish pastor, the principal, and the preschool director. The school leadership provides direction and resources to achieve the school’s educational mission. The pastor supports the mission and the leadership efforts of the principal and actively collaborates with her. The principal is a member of the parish team and attends the monthly team staff meeting. The principal and pastor hold regular meetings to discuss school issues. Due to the proximity of the church and school the two often meet in an unscheduled fashion as well.

The highly-qualified principal excels at providing guidance and leadership opportunities. Moreover, she sustains an environment in which faculty, students, and parents are encouraged to initiate and create new endeavors to further the educational mission of the school. The principal has widened the range of leadership choices available to faculty, students, and parents. Some recent examples include: endorsement of faculty research/recommendations for improvements to learning environment, support of STEM program creation to complement math and science curriculum, expansion of student government fund-raising and other projects to benefit charities, and introduction of “fun”-raisers.

The principal continues to identify and utilize human, instructional, financial, and physical resources to support learning. Each year, in collaboration with the pastor, the faculty, and the Parent Teacher Organization, she identifies one or two major areas of need which are then funded by proceeds from the annual school Auction (Fund-A-Need). The Fund-A-Need program has provided textbooks, enhanced technology, facility improvements, and much needed renovations and classroom furnishings.

Leadership comes also from our teaching faculty and staff; 11 are Virginia state certified and exceed the minimum requirements for recertification every five years; 10 are certified through the Virginia Catholic Education Association; and the remaining faculty members are working toward certification. 15 have a Masters degree and more than 80 percent of our faculty members have also gained professional experience in positions in government, business, or nonprofit organizations.

We draw on the leadership standards and resources in the Arlington Diocese (our district) as well, both through the formal accreditation and evaluation processes (e.g., Design for Excellence) and through the special programs and guidance available from the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and staff specialists in the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

There is a strong correlation between leadership decisions and student learning. Expanded professional development strengthens instruction. Community engagement expands our available resources, strengthens our service, and expands the number of opportunities available to enhance our students' learning and demonstrate their knowledge and skills. A high percentage of our graduates receive merit scholarships and take honors-level classes at the area high schools they attend. Blessed Sacrament prepares its students for

success academically. Through its multidisciplinary activities it also nurtures each student's natural inclination for serving the community. Leadership at all levels, including by students themselves, helps our school graduate caring people who are eager to share their talents as productive members of society.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Blessed Sacrament School exemplifies a true community and culture of service. Our mission, “to create an educated community to serve Christ and one another with integrity and respect,” drives everything. We set high expectations for educational achievement, service, and building community. The deliberate cultivation of a service-minded “community” is our single most important practice and it is the foundation of every achievement. We cultivate community with all of our stakeholders and across the full educational journey from early childhood through eighth grade. Through community engagement in a wide variety of “learn-by-doing” activities, children observe, learn, and practice how to be good people and compassionate, active members of society.

We seek to expand and deepen children’s knowledge and skills as students, as people, and as community members. A student’s “career” at Blessed Sacrament is an educational and community journey: a learning progression designed to achieve academic and personal growth through direct experience across the curriculum and enriching supplemental activities. As they progress, students have increased responsibility to teach younger students, to set a good example in behavior and studies, to develop and lead educational and service activities, to represent the school, to suggest improvements, and to demonstrate their learning in their actions and work products. Older students introduce prospective families to the school and answer questions in monthly Open Houses; and they involve younger students in school activities such as the Buddy system, Student Council, the spring musical, Culture Day, Field Day, service projects, the school newspaper “The Buzz,” and many other activities. Younger students participate enthusiastically and fully: they are empowered to offer ideas and pursue action. Family members volunteer their time and talents (e.g., artistic, managerial, technical, financial) in support of our mission and specific educational activities, and they raise significant funds to support annual operations and faculty professional development.

Our school community rallies in times of joy, such as when we first received Blue Ribbon recognition in 2008; and we come together in times of sorrow, such as when we lose family members to illness or tragedy. We embrace new students and families, we feel sadness when members leave our midst, and we respond to those in need. Like every real community, we have many achievements and successes, and we have moments of conflict and disagreement. We work to address and resolve our challenges through respectful approaches that keep the best interests of our students and community as the central focus.

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? \$9546
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2739

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? 8%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: Scantron

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

Scores are reported here as:

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2516
Number of students tested	26
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 4

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2601
Number of students tested	29
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 5

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2693
Number of students tested	30
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 6

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2845
Number of students tested	27
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 7

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	3053
Number of students tested	26
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2867
Number of students tested	26
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

Test: Performance Series Assessment

Grade: 4

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2934
Number of students tested	29
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 5

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	2956
Number of students tested	30
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 6

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	3074
Number of students tested	27
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

Test: Performance Series
Assessment

Grade: 7

Edition/Publication Year: 2016

Publisher: Scantron

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

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	3182
Number of students tested	26
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: