

U.S. Department of Education
2019 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 Dr. Casimer Badynee

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

Official School Name Alphonsus Academy & Center For The Arts

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1439 W Wellington Avenue

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

Chicago City IL State 60657-4121 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook

Telephone (773) 348-4629

Fax

Web site/URL https://www.alphonsusacademy.org E-mail kkey@aaca.school

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*Mr. Jim Rigg E-mail Jimrigg@archchicago.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Chicago School District Tel. (312) 534-5200

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. Jennifer Fardy
(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

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.

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	54	54	108
K	32	25	57
1	23	26	49
2	24	20	44
3	27	18	45
4	30	13	43
5	21	16	37
6	18	23	41
7	19	8	27
8	21	20	41
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	269	223	492

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 3 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 9%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	481
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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: 0 %
0 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</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: 3

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.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 9:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	98%	98%	97%
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 2018.

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.

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

We inspire and develop the whole child in an enriching environment combining academic excellence, an arts-integrated curriculum, and a supportive Catholic family.

PART III – SUMMARY

Alphonsus Academy & Center for the Arts (AACA) is a school in the Archdiocese of Chicago, the largest private school system in the United States. The school has been in existence for over 125 years and has evolved into a sought-after elementary school on the Northside of Chicago. Our mission statement states that we inspire and enable our children to reach their full potential by providing a rigorous education combining academic excellence, an arts-integrated curriculum, and a strong Catholic foundation. AACA is located in the Lakeview neighborhood in the city of Chicago. In the early 2000s, facing school merger, AACA changed its mission to an arts-integrated curriculum, increasing its efforts for mobilization and school improvement. Over the past decade, we have been blessed with growing enrollment.

AACA is more than a school—it's a family. We work with the community—of parents, St. Alphonsus Parish, and Lakeview.

Families and faculty volunteer and participate regularly within the parish at a variety of events including the annual St. Alphonsus Oktoberfest (city street festival) and Lenten Fish Fries as well as milestones like First Communion and Confirmation. Annual events like our Rocket Run, where students raise pledges to run around our neighborhood, and the Art & Soul fundraising gala help promote our school within Lakeview and raise funds for our innovative projects and improvements.

Academic excellence is our focus in every classroom for every student. Simply stated, we develop “learners.” Everything we do supports and enriches learning. This starts in preschool, and we have earned accolades for our preschool program and preparing students for elementary school. The success of our graduates can be attributed to every AACA teacher and learning experience from preschool through 8th grade. Our graduates are ready to accept the challenges of the strongest high schools because of their time at AACA and our commitment to personalized support. Evidence for success can be found at the end of every school year as we celebrate 8th grade graduation. Last year, our 2018 graduates were accepted to the best public and Catholic schools in Chicago.

AACA believes that the arts enhance academic excellence and is a major contributor to our success. Teachers collaborate with our “artists in residence” to plan grade-level units that reach all types of learners. In addition, students experience the arts through specials classes. New this year, 5th through 8th grade students are pursuing an arts curriculum that is diverse and individualized. Through our new Arts Pathways curriculum, students select art courses offering a wide range of experiences, including sewing, audio sculpture, ukulele, and Shakespearean drama. The Arts Pathways were designed with individual students in mind, and classes were created using student surveys. This new initiative has been positively viewed by students, parents, and teachers and speaks to our dedication to innovate and grow.

As a result of the Arts Pathway initiative for our upper grades, our students in the lower grades now experience the arts (drama, music, visual) for the entire year rather than one trimester. The benefit from a year-long versus a trimester-long class will be seen through projects and intense curricular studies.

Our learning environment is stronger because of our Student Support Team and their services. This team works directly with individual students, small groups, and co-teaching with classroom teachers. The goal of the support team has always been to foster excellence for all students. We recognize the diverse needs of our members, and the Learning Studio is an important resource within our school environment. Four learning specialists work directly with students and teachers to meet learners where they are. Differentiation is more than an abstract goal at AACA - it is a daily practice. The efforts for differentiation are evidenced by the growth of our students' standardized test scores and classroom assessments.

Our two full-time counselors also are integral to our success. Five years ago, AACA implemented Responsive Classroom school-wide through the leadership of our counselors. Our counselors work with teachers, support individual students, and are often called into classrooms for special consultation with large groups of students. Additionally, they hold community events like grade-level coffees to discuss age-appropriate topics with parents and host movie screenings for documentaries like "Screenagers" for the entire Lakeview area. We acknowledge the whole child and work as a community to foster growth

academically and social-emotionally.

Many students come from households with two working parents so we have created a purposeful after school and extra-curricular program. Over the years, we have developed a strong and competitive athletic program, promoting skills and habits that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. This year, we have revitalized our Bidy Sports program to ensure that young children have access to physical fitness and play. We offer competitive teams for boys and girls in volleyball, basketball, flag football, and cross-country. Over the past five years, we have renovated the gymnasium, outdoor sports court, and playground with the generous donations and energy of our community. In addition to sports, students can work after school in the newly renovated iStudio on programming and robotics.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

At AACA, teachers use the Common Core Standards to plan and develop units that support the ELA content of reading, writing, and vocabulary. Teachers use leveled texts and teach a variety of literacy skills such as summarizing strategies, story elements, theme, main idea, and character analysis. As part of our school's mission, teachers integrate the arts to support students' engagement and deeper understanding of the content. ELA teachers integrate the arts during daily lessons and use arts-integrated projects to showcase students' learning at the end of units. In 8th grade, students use historical fiction to explore static and dynamic characterization. They examine propaganda through ads and political publications and then produce their own advertisement where they incorporate propaganda techniques. In 6th grade, students study theme by analyzing different paintings where they examine the colors, shapes, and tone. Using these techniques, they determine the theme of their novel. Fourth grade students explore perspective by participating in reader's theater, taking on the roles and points of view of different characters. The 1st grade students explore visualization while reading poetry. They wear "visualizing glasses" while reading poems and identify "visualizing words" and then draw what they see through their lenses.

In addition to arts-integrated projects, ELA teachers differentiate and use a variety of assessments that include note-taking, discussions, comprehension questions, quizzes, papers, presentations, and speeches. These are used to monitor students' understanding of content and skills, and teachers use re-teaching, small groups, or individual check-ins to support students' learning and to help students independently access the content and fully understand it. ELA teachers benefit from the assistance of the Student Support Team to push into the classroom for added support. In addition, teachers use standardized test data to identify and address struggling students, areas that need re-teaching, and any gaps in the curriculum.

1b. Mathematics:

As a standards-based grading school, math instruction and curriculum are based on the Common Core Standards. Teachers meet to discuss the standards and align units and content across grade levels PK-8. Classrooms use Envision in the primary grades and SpringBoard by College Board in 6-8th, and the standards guide instruction as teachers measure student progress within units rich with technology and arts-integration.

All math instruction takes on an RtI 3-tier approach. Students are screened at the beginning of the year and twice throughout using the MAP test, allowing teachers and support staff to determine potential areas of strength and challenge and improve unit planning. All students engage in best practices of Tier 1 instruction, including full class and small group instruction, math centers, and cross-curricular arts-integrated projects. Teachers work with learning specialists and often co-teach to provide differentiated instruction for both remediation and enrichment. Daily formative assessment is key to giving targeted feedback and driving student progress.

A strong element of AACA's math program includes our arts-integration and application. Students are asked not just to do math but to engage in discussion of math and strategies. Just like the arts, we encourage students to look creatively, see alternate solutions, and apply it to the world around us. In the lower grades, students model multiple ways to show operations visually or numerically. They use the artist Kandinsky to model arrays and compose music using fraction addition. In the upper grades students use Desmos to discuss errors and apply simulations. They create wire mobiles as analogies to solving equations and program Sphero robots to paint polygons using interior and exterior angles. Over half of 8th graders take Algebra 1 in 8th grade, and almost 50% of graduates in 2018 placed into Geometry their freshman year in high school.

1c. Science:

In the area of science, AACA curriculum incorporates a combination of science standards, common core reading/writing standards, and integration of the arts.

AACA's science is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in order to provide logical, age-appropriate, and scaffolded science learning from kindergarten (K) through 8th grades. Grades K-5 follow a specific content/topic sequence as prescribed by NGSS, which provides teachers with specific guidelines for depth of knowledge and assessment boundaries for each standard covered. In grades 6-8 at AACA, teachers follow NGSS topics and employ the middle school sequence as suggested by the Archdiocese of Chicago. NGSS standards are assessed based on performance expectations (PE) associated with each standard. Each PE will include a science and engineering practice, cross-cutting concepts, and the core discipline focus. PE finished products may include planning investigations, creating models, or developing scientific explanations or arguments.

Along with the NGSS standard guidelines in grades K-8, AACA also incorporates the Common Core standards for Reading Informational (RI) text in science. In lower grades, teachers may employ trade books or topic related articles to support student content learning. In middle school, students also read science topic related articles along with text. Additionally, middle school students focus on science literacy and are taught and practice Cornell note-taking skills in science to support identifying key ideas and supporting details of text.

An equally important focus of our school and science curriculum is arts-integration and cross-curricular integrated units.

AACA teachers brainstorm with our art specialists and colleagues to find opportunities for art-science connections and cross-curricular experiences. Examples include a states of matter unit with art focus of Chihuly glass, structure of matter connecting to Seurat's pointillism technique, and live trout raised in the classroom to study ecosystems and habitats.

Fourth grade math and science students are raising trout, learning about the life cycles, habitat, and ecosystems along with care and documentation of the trout until the release date in the spring. Middle school math and science collaborate on a unit of proportions and scale distance to create a scale model of the solar system installed in the middle school hallway.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

At AACA, teachers begin with the Illinois Social Studies Standards to guide the content and themes of social studies units. Teachers also use the Reading Informational Text standards from Common Core to purposefully integrate literacy instruction. To support literacy instruction, teachers use leveled texts and explicitly teach close-reading and annotation strategies to help students independently access content. Across grade levels, and especially in the upper grades, social studies classes emphasize analyzing primary sources and discussing social justice issues.

As part of our school's mission, teachers integrate the arts to support students' engagement with and application of content. Social studies teachers integrate the arts during daily lessons and with arts-integrated projects to showcase students' learning at the end of units. In 7th and 8th grade, students frequently analyze political cartoons to interpret artists' viewpoints on events, laws, and figures during periods from the Civil War through present day. In 5th grade, during a unit on slavery, students explore the idea of adaptation while creating their own quilt square from scraps of fabric. In 3rd grade, students act out a play that helps them understand the sequence and effects of Chicago Fire as well as the emotions behind it. In 1st grade, students learn about the importance of community helpers to our society and the role that they play. To culminate the unit, they dress up, act as a community helper, and deliver a speech describing how they help the community.

Social studies teachers use a variety of assessments. These include traditional formats like notes, discussion, quizzes, or papers. In addition, teachers assign projects like writing monologues for historical figures, creating timelines, skits, presentations, or creating cartoons. Teachers use assessments to monitor students

understanding of content and literacy skills and use re-teaching, small groups, or individual check-ins to support students' learning.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

AACA Preschool offers curriculum in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science (including health), social and emotional development, physical development, visual arts, music and drama. Our preschool academic standards are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for ages 3-5. These standards were revised in 2013 to align with Common Core Standards. The primary indicator that the AACA program prepares students for kindergarten and beyond is that the majority of our students exceed the academic standards that the state has set. They enter kindergarten with learner traits that support school success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our namesake itself, Alphonsus Academy and Center for the Arts, tells a story of the emphasis we put on educating a child that has experiences in learning that are unique. Our specials program strives to provide our students with multi-faceted experiences that enhance their education intellectually, emotionally, developmentally, and spiritually. To bring to life a vision of a well-rounded, educational experience, we offer music, drama, visual arts, technology, Spanish, health, physical education, library, and SEL learning classes to the students at AACA.

All PK-8 students participate in drama, visual art, and music. PK-4th grade students see all three arts each trimester, and 5th-8th grade students choose two arts classes each trimester. The continuum of learning happens with our youngest learners building knowledge in the foundations of these art classes. This enables our middle school students to go beyond the basics and choose arts learning experiences like band, choir, ukulele, Shakespeare, audio sculpture, sewing, and much more. The arts support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by: fostering an opportunity for self-expression, providing opportunities for students to work together and develop SEL skills, develop literacy for culture, and provide students with opportunity for solving problems through different media.

For students in grades K-8, our technology and media instruction focuses on digital citizenship, core technology skills, and is largely project-centered in approach. The technology curriculum is rooted in content creation rather than consumption to support and enhance essential skills like planning, perseverance, decision making, problem solving, and time management, as well as give students a repertoire of ways to show and explain their learning. Kindergarten-3rd grade students experience technology in grade level curricular projects. Grades 4-8 attend a course for one 50-minute period per week. Computational thinking concepts, robotics, 3D imaging, and design thinking approaches are included in our instruction.

To expose grades K-3 to a multitude of texts, they attend library once a week. They are introduced to fictional characters, series books, informational text, cultural differences, and learn to identify books that they can take home to read or bring to their classrooms for a read-to-self component of their literacy program.

Designed to teach our students the importance of speaking other languages and learning about other cultures, Spanish utilizes techniques such as Total Physical Response and Total Proficiency Through Storytelling to keep students actively engaged in internalizing the Spanish language. Music, art projects, and games are some of the tools used to learn Spanish in an engaging and creative way. Kindergarten and 1st grade students have Spanish once a week for 30 minutes, and grades 2-8 have classes two times a week for 45-50 minutes.

The Physical Education (PE) program at AACA focuses on students to learn a variety of life, behavioral, NBRS 2019

and social skills, as well as the foundations to become lifelong movers. PE correlates directly to the overall wellness of children (physical, mental/emotional, and social health), making students more receptive to learning. Our preschool and kindergarten students attend PE classes once a week for 30 minutes, and grades 1-8 attend two times a week. The school health education program is provided for grades 4-8 once a week and addresses the importance of wellness.

We have a comprehensive and proactive school counseling program focused on developing self-awareness, self-regulation, grit, growth mindset and leadership in all students. Our two school counselors deliver SEL lessons to all classes, understanding that academic learning only occurs when the students are socially and emotionally ready. Our middle school students participate in a seminar with topics such as communications style, personality types, teamwork challenges, high school readiness, healthy choices and decision making. Our students in PK through 4th grade participate in social emotional lessons helping them identify emotions, manage strong feelings, and problem solve challenges. Our counselors also meet with students individually and in small groups designed to support healthy, emotional development.

Our Specials Team is a unique blend of teaching and professional artists and highly skilled educators/counselors who focus on their individual areas of expertise with pride and passion. We know that educating our students in an arts-integrated approach to learning inspires our children to embrace school while expanding their depth and breadth of understanding of core subject matter.

3. Special Populations:

At AACA we believe that every student is an individual and therefore should have learning tailored to them. For many years we have implemented Response to Intervention (RtI) to monitor student progress. Since students come to us at varying academic abilities, we feel it important to take the time each year to figure out each student's ability level. To do this we benchmark our students using NWEA MAP testing three times a year to determine their areas of strength and any areas of concern. If a student is performing below average, we use AIMSweb to provide more information about their areas of need. From this information we can meet each child exactly where they are.

If a student is performing below grade level, our Student Support Team (SST) works with students in small groups and 1:1 to bring them up to grade level. Groups and students meet anywhere from three to five times a week depending on needs. SST uses intervention programs such as Leveled Literacy Intervention and Do the Math to provide remediation lessons. AIMSweb is then used to progress monitor students who require academic intervention support.

For students who are at or above grade level, our standards-based teaching allows the teacher to mold the curriculum to students' needs. Additionally, all teachers have knowledge in differentiation and evidence of this can be seen in their lessons.

When students do not respond to the RtI process, we have two case managers who support students, parents, and teachers through the evaluation process. Our case managers gather data and narrative reports to help students get an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504, depending on their need. Once a student has a diagnosis, SST helps implement their accommodations and support needs in the classroom.

We recognize that all students need different tools and strategies to be successful during a school day. From flexible seating to extended time on assignments and tests, our school works to ensure that students receive what they need.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The AACA classroom is nurturing and engaging. Students thrive in a risk-free environment. Classrooms model the Responsive Classroom protocols and integrate AACA's School-Wide Behavior Plan document. Students participate in managing the organization of the classroom and instructional needs. We believe that we should never do for a child that which they can do for himself or herself. Students are assigned age-appropriate roles such as the classroom greeter, line leader, supply manager, prayer leader, photographer, etc. This empowers the student and increases their confidence. Flexible seating, unique furniture, and thoughtful interior design assist with engagement. We are cognizant of the different ways that students learn (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and the variation in multiple intelligences and integrate a variety of instructional strategies to best engage the student.

Emphasis in the classroom is placed on the process of learning. Our standards-based grading system provides students of all grade levels targeted feedback to improve and grow while creating a safe learning environment for students to take risks and make mistakes. Teachers are instrumental in this, taking daily formative assessments and building supportive relationships with students and families. The professional community at AACA encourages teachers to plan rich units integrating arts and technology. Teachers are provided weekly professional development time to learn and plan collaboratively and allowed the autonomy to make curricular decisions for students. They also are encouraged to continue their own learning through personal professional development like attending or presenting at conferences, book studies, and outside certification, paid for in part by the school's professional development fund.

We are continually exploring opportunities to engage our students more fully. Last year we integrated a cross-curricular unit, "Trout in the Classroom," in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. AACA is certified to raise trout and release Rainbow Trout in Lake Michigan. Students learn about biology through the care of the trout and ecology through preserving wildlife resources in our community. Even though the trout are housed in a 4th grade classroom, it was an exciting focus for the entire school community, incorporating the project into all subjects.

AACA has a strong relationship between school, home, and community. Parent commitment is evident through volunteerism in the classroom, athletics, and arts events. Students exhibit art in the parish and participate in mass and other traditions at the Church with the wider Catholic community. We engage in service through our commitments to Blessings in a Backpack, the Lakeview Pantry, and Kindness Week. Student learning is showcased in the community in a variety of events including seasonal concerts and the annual Arts Together celebration.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We view parents as partners in education. Frequent opportunities for face-to-face communication paired with regular e-mails keep parents informed about student's academic achievements and challenges. For example, we hold an annual assembly of parents to share our mission, vision, and strategic plan at the start of the year. Our counselors work together with teachers to conduct "Parent Morning Meetings" at each grade level to provide insight into the classroom and social-emotional growth of students. Teachers conduct regular conferences and schedule meetings as necessary to discuss individual student learning progress.

Key advancement initiatives are crucial to student success. The core of each effort is to raise funds to impact instruction. Annual events such as Rocket Run, our walk-a-thon, and Art & Soul, our auction, raise funds to support our school's operating budget. Without the funds raised through these efforts, we could not engage in the depth of faculty professional development that contributes to student learning. During Rocket Run preparations, students and teachers talk about the importance of having pride in one's school and how supporting an institution or cause with one's time, talent, and treasure strengthens it. For Art & Soul, students collaboratively create classroom projects to be auctioned at the event. Students are not

passive recipients of donors' generosity - they are active participants! The faculty supports the auction as well by contributing their time to host events with students. These auction items generate funds and build a stronger community by offering students and teachers a chance to connect outside of the classroom. Funds generated have recently renovated the gym, recess and after school areas, tech lab (iStudio), and the Arts Hub. At AACA every member of the community serves as a member of the Advancement Team.

In addition, we use our website, social media, and e-mail marketing to provide insight into the exciting things happening at AACA. Each week, our school sends an e-blast to parents highlighting learning happening in classrooms. Special presentations are also prepared to communicate key initiatives such as the arts-integrated curriculum units. We also engage with local businesses through our sponsorship program. Videos and images of student learning are shared on AACA's Facebook page or through the Upper Middle School Twitter and Instagram accounts. The latter is also used to model appropriate social media use for our middle school students. Student successes are more broadly shared with community members through our weekly church bulletin. This multi-channel communication strategy aims to communicate the exemplary learning happening at AACA.

3. Professional Development:

Developing and attracting highly qualified educators contributes to achieving academic excellence for all students. Each Wednesday, students are dismissed early so faculty can engage in whole staff professional development. This includes learning from local organizations and universities and planning time with colleagues to collaborate, align, and share. Our preschool through 8th grade curriculum and instructional practices have been strengthened through our partnership with DePaul University. Our work with DePaul, focusing on curriculum mapping, authentic assessment, and unit design, arms our teachers with a framework for instruction. DePaul often uses our classrooms as classrooms with opportunities for mentorship and student teaching.

Project AIM has begun a year-long professional development series for teachers to refine how we define and implement arts-integration across academic disciplines and grade levels. Project AIM infuses classrooms with creativity and brings experiential, expressive engagement to students' exploration of the core curriculum. AACA teachers' sessions with Project AIM's teaching artists explore arts-integration through hands-on music and visual art lessons. Our continued work with other providers - Hubbard Street Dance, Urban Gateway, and the Athenaeum Theater - strengthens both instructional practices and student engagement.

AACA employs two Literacy Coaches, using our budget and federal funding, to coach all teachers to integrate literacy strategies within instructional practices, model effective teaching skills, and collaborate with teachers to reflect upon their teaching practice. Over the past three years, teachers in kindergarten through 8th grade have experienced the benefits of gifted and dynamic coaches working in the classroom side-by-side with teachers. Instructional coaches working with this small ratio of teachers is a rarity in both the public and private school sectors.

Our Director of Preschool works directly with students and teachers. Our director has a schedule that allows her to work directly with preschool teachers. The preschool director also works with small groups of students to ensure kindergarten readiness. Her role as coach, instructional expert, curriculum leader, and child-development specialist becomes a valued resource for teachers as well as students.

4. School Leadership:

AACA supports a culture that nurtures both learning and leadership. The goal is not to foster leadership or learning in isolation but rather to shape both outcomes. Leadership at AACA is shared, encouraged, and expected.

Teachers play an important role in school leadership through the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The role of the ILT is to counsel the principal and lead the school. One year the ILT saw a need for math PD for the new math program. The team advocated for both funds and time for a specific math PD.

Teachers within the ILT advocate for new school-wide initiatives outside the ILT forum. Recently, the middle school arts program was revamped to include student choice and a variety of arts classes. The two-year planning for the “Arts Pathways” was conceived, organized, and executed by teachers. Teachers within the ILT worked collaboratively with staff and the administration to execute the Arts Pathways for middle school students.

Another example of teacher leadership is this application for the Blue Ribbon initiative. One teacher actively sought out the necessary paperwork and information regarding the Blue Ribbon initiative. She mobilized an entire school to work and complete the application materials.

Teachers, outside the ILT, often see a need to exercise their own leadership skills. For example, support staff determined that the kindergarten literacy program was not preparing students for first grade and beyond. Teachers met with the school principal to advocate for professional learning resources and time to work with kindergarten teachers. As a result, the kindergarten team spent the summer and the new school year preparing for a new literacy initiative. As a result of both leadership and learning, the kindergarten literacy program is becoming a strong component of the kindergarten curriculum.

Similarly, parents play a strong role in both learning and leadership. Fundraising is a major component for supporting instructional and curricular resources for students. The Mothers' Club and Fathers' Club traditionally lead fundraising. Parents, through conversation and collaboration, determined the existing model was archaic and ineffective for modern fundraising efforts. The clubs united to form a non-profit organization, Friends of AACA, to support the school. Today the Friends of AACA is a thriving fundraising force supporting both instruction and curriculum.

The AACA Advisory School Board also plays a prominent role in parent leadership at AACA. This organization leads all efforts supporting the school mission. Last year, the board actively worked to review Vision 2018 and charter the school's new vision - Vision 2023. The board also reexamined the school's mission statement and revised AACA's mission. The board led this effort by collaborating with the parent, teacher, and student communities.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At AACA, the integration of the arts into academic subject matter is at the heart of teaching and learning. Students benefit from an arts-integration program on many levels - intellectually, emotionally, developmentally, and spiritually. The arts act as both a gateway to learning and a tool for analytic and creative engagement with the whole curriculum. We instruct, facilitate, and challenge students to develop a comprehensive approach to learning that is evident in the classroom, arts spaces, and the learning community.

Our faculty engages in regular professional development around the arts to sustain this aspect of our culture. Teachers collaborate with our faculty artists around unique strategies to engage students. These range from simple changes to instruction in order to reach all types of learners (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) to rich, arts-integrated units, and collaborating on larger inquiry and project-based units that introduce students to different ways of thinking and artistic practices. Our teachers use the Studio Habits of Mind, a framework of what students learn through the arts developed by Harvard Project Zero, in structuring how students brainstorm, create, critique and revise, and finally document their work. These reiterate that learning is a process, often subject to revision and revisiting, and pushes students to problem solve and think in creative ways.

One example of this practice in action is our Math Mobiles project in 8th grade math during a unit on solving equations. Math teachers worked with the visual arts teacher to investigate the idea of balance with students. The class first looked at the works of Alexander Calder, a modern sculptor, and how we can observe balance in Calder's metal mobiles and installations. Students were inspired to sketch initial designs for mobiles, conduct communal experiments with balance, and then revisit and revise their sketches. Math class time was spent building mobiles based on artists' techniques. Student work has been installed in the hallways of the school along with personal reflections, not only beautifying the school but allowing students to see examples of their work. It is a source of pride for students and engages them in thinking about their learning and comparing it to the learning of other students. As the unit progressed into content, students could draw back on these tangible experiences and vocabulary, deepening their understanding of balancing equations.

Students who engage in this way of learning demonstrate deeper understanding of content and vocabulary as evidenced by their written and video reflections post-unit as well as final content assessments. Our students also share their learning at school and community events, including our annual Arts Together where both content and art classes share the stage to demonstrate units of study. As we discuss and share experiences, we believe this approach to curriculum strengthens not only the learner but also the wider community.

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? \$10077
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$5000

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

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 3%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: Aspire

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Publisher: ACT

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

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	43
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: 2018

Test: Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	422
Number of students tested	41
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	421
Number of students tested	43
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	427
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
Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	427
Number of students tested	40
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	434
Number of students tested	46
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: 2018

Test: Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	417
Number of students tested	43
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	421
Number of students tested	41
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	422
Number of students tested	43
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	425
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
Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	425
Number of students tested	40
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: 2018

Test: ASPIRE
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	430
Number of students tested	46
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: