

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 Mr. George Azar

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

Official School Name Saint Joseph Grade School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 216 N Hill Street

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

South Bend IN 46617-2720
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County St. Joseph

Telephone (574) 234-0451

Fax (574) 234-0524

Web site/URL

https://www.stjosephgradeschool.co

m

E-mail gazar@stjosephgradeschool.com

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Joe Brettnacher Ph.D.

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

E-mail jbrettnacher@diocesefwsb.org

District Name Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend School District Tel. _____

(260) 422-4611

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 Dr. Christian Dallavis Ph.D.

(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	27	32	59
K	26	18	44
1	32	19	51
2	26	26	52
3	24	26	50
4	26	26	52
5	29	23	52
6	25	20	45
7	22	16	38
8	18	17	35
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	255	223	478

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % 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: 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, 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	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	501
(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):
French, Polish, Spanish, Thai

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
Total number students who qualify: 1

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
44 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>3</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>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>29</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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 22:1

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	97%	97%	97%	97%	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. 2011

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

The mission of St. Joseph Grade School is educating the hearts and minds in the Holy Cross tradition, making God known, loved, and served.

PART III – SUMMARY

Saint Joseph Grade School (SJGS) is a Catholic school of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, stewarded by the Congregation of Holy Cross, serving boys and girls in preschool through 8th grade. SJGS is accredited by AdvancED and is proud to have been named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2011, and an Indiana 4-Star School each year from 2011 to 2017.

SJGS is located near downtown South Bend, in the budding East Bank urban area one mile from the University of Notre Dame. The student population is 88.9% White, 1.7% Black or African American, 5.4% Hispanic or Latino, and 3.3% two or more races. The proximity to Notre Dame and the downtown business district attracts many professional families to the school. However, financial assistance funds, including Indiana’s Choice Scholarship Program, allow SJGS to serve families with a wide range of income levels.

SJGS was founded in 1854 as a small parish school. In 1926, with the school was staffed primarily by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, a booming enrollment led to the opening of the now historic school building. But by the early 1990s, enrollment had dropped to about 200 students, less than half of capacity, putting the school on the verge of closure. Led by strong leadership, SJGS overcame this adverse time and is now thriving with enrollment at 477. The growth and vitality of the school led to a \$1.7 million renovation and expansion in 1999. A further \$4.5 million phased expansion from 2013 to 2016 added a preschool, a full-size gymnasium, and a classroom wing with upgraded space for science, art, and music.

The mission at SJGS is born out of the tradition of Holy Cross. The vision of education, inspired by the teachings of Holy Cross founder Blessed Basil Moreau, focuses on educating not only the minds of children, but also their hearts. At the center of a Holy Cross education are the pillars of mind, heart, zeal, family, and hope.

At SJGS, educating the mind begins with a full and rigorous literature-based curriculum. Teachers work together closely to integrate subjects and units of study. SJGS is dedicated to providing support resources and programs to help each child excel to his or her full potential. The school has a staff of four full-time licensed resource teachers that help students in the classroom and in small-group instruction. K-2 classrooms have aides that work closely with students. The school invests in enrichment programs, such as “Moby Max” and “Project Lead the Way,” to further engage students and prepare them to succeed. Teachers foster a love for learning that is not confined to the classroom walls. Field trips, such as those to local art museums and to the Holocaust museum in Chicago, expand students’ worldviews.

Educating hearts and growing together as a family are mission elements lived out each day among students and staff. SJGS students and faculty gather as a school daily for morning prayer and announcements. Each month, SJGS students meet in “Family Groups” for faith, service, and community-building activities led by pairs of eighth graders. Each younger student at SJGS is paired with a “Mass Buddy,” an older student that helps model the practice of faith at weekly Mass. A junior high peer mentoring program provides support to fifth and sixth graders from older students. Junior high students are trained as peer mediators to work closely with other students in navigating conflicts. Student social and emotional development is also cultivated through interventions constructed at weekly teacher team meetings, as well as through initiatives and daily care administered by a staff counselor and a staff nurse.

Moreau believed that education of heart and mind must also enkindle in students “zeal,” a burning desire to use what is learned to serve those in need. SJGS places a strong emphasis on service-learning outreach programs, matching each grade level with a non-profit service organization in the community. The Summons Project, a capstone service-learning program, provides an opportunity for eighth graders to discern their individual gifts and prepares them to continue in service beyond graduation.

Hope – faith in God’s love – is what gives staff and students confidence to take on new challenges, to seek deeper wisdom, and to nourish their gifts. SJGS teachers prepare students in heart and mind in hope that they are prepared to persevere in faith as they journey forward. Each day, students leave morning assembly by answering the question posed by the principal, “What are you going to do today?” Students respond with

enthusiasm, “Make God known, loved, and served!”

SJGS continues to attract new families and community support. The 2011 Blue Ribbon recognition was key in promoting a campaign to fund its 2013-2016 expansion. The new gymnasium has improved engagement of the school community, providing a place for the entire student body to gather for assembly, and allowing the hosting of athletic programs and numerous school functions. The Blue Ribbon also inspired renewed confidence and energy within the teachers, staff, and families, as it was attributed to their zealous efforts in educating students. It is unity in all areas, as well as the strength of conviction that SJGS will always strive for improvement for the students, that guides the school’s desire to be a National Blue Ribbon School for a second time.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

SJGS offers a core curriculum that far exceeds state and federal standards. The curriculum is unique in that it is literature-based, rather than textbook-based. The curriculum was developed to meet the diverse needs of the SJGS population. The school has mastered the craft of teaching by finding the best materials and resources and implementing cross-curricular subject integration wherever possible. SJGS teachers routinely meet to align the curriculum each year to ensure foundational skills are met across grade levels. Students receive a standards-based report card three times each year. The standards come from the Indiana Department of Education.

By continually evaluating and developing programs and providing needed resources, SJGS ensures the curriculum meets the diverse needs of every student.

Language Arts

The language arts curriculum includes four main components: reading, writing, spelling, and grammar. Students have opportunities to express language arts abilities in a variety of ways, from discussions, written responses, and book projects to plays, songs, and artistic expression.

The literature-based reading program allows students to experience authentic texts and permits differentiated learning to meet individual interests and reading abilities. Thematic units provide opportunities to challenge students to read from a variety of genres. The implementation of higher-level questioning through the use of Depth of Knowledge helps students become better critical readers. Literature circles, book talks, and enrichment centers contribute to the “reader’s workshop” framework. Grade by grade, students build upon a foundation of “nine essential reading strategies,” which aim to create lifelong, critical readers.

“Writer’s Workshop” is the common framework used for navigating the writing process. Students are taught to analyze writing models and apply what is learned. A key element is the 6+1 Trait Writing Model, a mechanism which helps students self-assess during the writing process and provides a consistent vocabulary for discussing writing year to year. SJGS students also use the staff-developed “writer’s guide” as a resource for strong writing.

Spelling, phonics, and grammar are incorporated through mini-lessons and are linked to literature and writing. In grades K-3, teachers implement Wilson’s “Foundations” program to provide a critical foundation in phonics.

SJGS celebrates a love of language arts through yearly participation in enrichment programs such as Spelling Bee, the Young Authors’ Conference, and Scholastic Writing Award competition.

1b. Mathematics:

The Everyday Mathematics program in grades K-5 incorporates basic facts and computation and encourages the use of multiple methods to allow individual students to find ways that are personally successful. The program spirals learning, providing continuous reinforcement of skills and concepts. Students work on mastery of basic facts using Moby Max. Problem solving skills are practiced and reinforced using “Sunshine Math.” A variety of instructional methods and enrichment tools ensure subject mastery, including problem solving activities, games, hands-on manipulatives, and literature.

The junior high math program is designed to meet Algebra I standards. The seventh grade program is a transition to Algebra, while the eighth grade curriculum is Algebra I with a spiral review of skills. Beginning in sixth grade, students keep a notebook that becomes their textbook for use throughout junior high.

1c. Science:

The science curriculum uses hands-on and inquiry-based techniques to guide student learning. The goal is to ensure that each student achieves a functional level of scientific and technological literacy, but also to awaken within students a thirst for continued scientific inquiry. A combination of textbooks, literature, journals, vocabulary study, and experiments, supported by the latest tools and technology, enables students to understand and experience scientific concepts. Junior high students conduct experiments in a well-equipped science classroom. Fifth and seventh grade students create scientific-method-based research projects during Science Fair. Students in grades 1-8 have the opportunity to further scientific learning in Lego League, with teams recently competing at the state level.

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

The social studies curriculum is designed to develop knowledgeable citizens and to instill in students both an awareness of and a curiosity about an ever-changing world and society. SJGS seeks to provide an intellectual and moral foundation for constructive participation in the democratic institutions that affect students' lives and the lives of those around them. By blending facts with inquiry-based thinking, students develop informed appreciation of cultures, national identity, and civic responsibility.

Social studies concepts are extended through participation in Geography Bee, Quiz Bowl, and enrichment projects sponsored by community organizations.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

The preschool program, opened in 2013, was not recognized by the state as part of the grade school until the fall of 2017. In the spring of 2018, the preschool became accredited through completion of the AdvancED Early Learning Standards. The preschool exceeded expectations in all accreditation areas and scored a 98% in meeting all of the 378 criteria set by AdvancED. In the fall of 2018, the preschool was recognized as a Paths to QUALITY™ Level 4 Program, the highest mark in Indiana's statewide quality rating and improvement system for early care and education. The preschool employs HighScope Curriculum, which uses play-based, age-appropriate methods, incorporating best practices in early childhood learning. The curriculum is aligned to Indiana State Early Learning Foundations, which is a continuum of developmental milestones aligned with kindergarten standards. Besides developing a strong set of social skills, preschoolers receive a solid foundation in basic literacy and math skills, demonstrated by smooth transitions into the kindergarten curriculum at SJGS.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Religion

SJGS institutes a catechetical religion curriculum designed to conform to the National Directory for Catechesis. The curriculum incorporates daily, age-appropriate topics for each grade level. Each topic has a different goal, with each building upon the others. Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith and the meaning of the Liturgy and the Sacraments, promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ and teaches how to pray with Christ, prepares students to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church, and promotes a missionary spirit that prepares students to be present as Christians in society. To bridge the preschool with the grade school, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori approach to teaching Catholic religious education, begins in preschool and continues into kindergarten. As a whole, the curriculum fosters each student's spiritual growth and provides the foundation to live their faith.

Spanish

SJGS is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements: 80 percent of SJGS seventh and eighth graders take Spanish during the regular school day for the equivalent of 168 minutes per week for a full year. SJGS believes that exposure to Spanish language and culture is both enlightening and practical, enhancing the lives of all students who meaningfully engage the language. Spanish language and culture are integrated into various classroom thematic units as enrichment in first through fourth grade. As a required part of the curriculum, students in fifth grade take Spanish language class once per week, working towards a more advanced sixth, seventh, and eighth grade curriculum, meeting three or four times a week, as preparation for high school Spanish.

Art & Music

The recent classroom addition has provided SJGS students with more fully-equipped spaces for weekly art and music classes. The K-8 art curriculum, developed by the full-time art teacher, follows a discipline-based art education approach with a focus on art production, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics. In recent years, SJGS students have won numerous Scholastic Art Awards, including a national honor presented at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2016.

Studies in music at SJGS combine music, movement, drama, and speech in student-centered activities to develop musical literacy and the students' identities as composers with cultural and historical awareness. The full-time music teacher is trained in three philosophies of teaching music – Orff, Kodaly, and First Steps – which are all integrated into the music curriculum for grades K-8. Students in grades 3-5 showcase learning in a musical drama performance each year. Every other year, junior high students may participate in a full musical production. SJGS also provides extracurricular strings, band, and choir programs for further music enrichment. SJGS families look forward to the Celebration of the Arts each spring, showcasing the many outstanding artistic and musical talents of students.

Technology

During weekly classes in the computer lab, students in grades K-8 receive basic computer skills instruction such as keyboarding and word processing, as well as an introduction to coding, app building, and tech innovation. In 2015, 8th grade students were awarded “Best in State” in the Verizon Innovative App Challenge, a national competition in which students design a mobile application concept that addresses a need or problem in local schools or communities.

Students have the opportunity for additional STEAM creativity and innovation using mobile computer labs, smartboards, digital cameras, 3D printers, programmable robots, and a variety of other tools available throughout the classrooms. Tools are used for enrichment projects, from PowerPoint presentations to student-created movies, to enhance all curricular areas.

Physical Education

The physical education program has been greatly enhanced by the new gym addition and adjacent outdoor green space, allowing instruction in both indoor and outdoor activities from soccer and football to volleyball and roller-skating. The mission of twice-weekly physical education classes for K-8 is to motivate students to value physical fitness and to provide opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction. Students develop and enhance proper personal and social behavior while participating in physical activities and learning new skills.

In addition to formal physical education classes, all students have recess each day, with K-2 students having additional recess time built into their schedule. Students in grades 2-4 have access to intramural sports while students in grades 5-8 may participate in varsity sports, which participate in the area Catholic school athletic league.

Minds In Motion

Minds In Motion, implemented weekly in K-8, is a program that focuses on improving cognitive functioning
NBRS 2019

by practicing specialized but simple movements. Under the guidance of a trained Minds In Motion instructor, students perform exercises and challenges that are designed to strengthen their focusing skills, integrate their sensory skills, and train their learning skills through the stimulation of visual, auditory, and motor processes. The outcome is a better integrated and balanced child who performs better in school and at home.

3. Special Populations:

SJGS strives to recognize the needs of individual students. Faculty, administration, parents, and students each play an important role in determining instructional methods.

At tier one, teachers focus on core instructional practices in the classroom. Teachers post and discuss learning objectives at the start of each lesson. Formative assessments guide interventions and mastery of objectives. Tier-two students receive small group instruction with resource teachers who visit classrooms as well as one-on-one support from the regular classroom teacher. Students at the tier three level receive support in resource rooms. Students that need extra support have access to a resource team.

Throughout each year, teachers gather in professional learning communities to review school improvement plan goals. They use data from standardized tests, school surveys, local assessment results, and instructional objectives to begin the profile and guide in reviewing school improvement goals.

To match content to the individual learner, the faculty meets monthly and reviews the collected data. Each faculty member is assigned to a professional learning committee where expertise in that subject area is used to plan interventions and activities. Teachers use the activities, as well as the collected data, to guide instruction in the classroom. Faculty members are also part of team committees, to discuss goals and activities specific for grade levels to increase student achievement.

Collaboratively reviewing data helps teachers to know and understand each student as an individual. Lessons are designed to challenge students to think. Students are active participants by taking ownership of strategies and vocabulary that are taught. Delivery of instruction in the classroom includes direct instruction, hands-on activities, inquiry-based projects, the use of manipulatives, and literature. Using a student's Lexile level, which is measured in NWEA, and the reading intervention program, Leveled Literacy Intervention from Fountas and Pinnell, allows for reading instruction to be differentiated through use of literature books in reading and non-fiction articles in other subjects. Technology assists in the instruction of students, including those with specific needs, through the use computer programs such as FastForward and Reading Assistance, books on CD, calculators, computers, and interactive whiteboards. Instruction is based on multiple intelligences, learning styles, and higher-level thinking, and allows for student choice. Students have access to flexible seating, sensory boxes, and a sensory room to help support the varied learners in the school family.

Overall school effectiveness begins in individual classrooms and moves throughout the school. Classroom and individual data on performance of grade-level skills and standards such as reading fluency, comprehension, end-of-unit math standards, and writing traits is gathered several times per year to enable teachers to analyze performance of both individual students and the class as a whole. NWEA is administered three times per year. This data allows teachers to see students' levels and growth. This information guides classroom instruction as teachers address re-teaching, changing instruction, or enrichment as needed. Teachers use the data to create more effective learning groups and literature circles so that appropriate scaffolding takes place. Data showing individual performance in skills and standards allows teachers to identify students needing individual or different instruction, resource help, enrichment, or to be watched for possible future evaluation. This continual process of data collection, analysis, intervention, and more data collection allows teachers to analyze change in student performance and react to it.

This classroom data is also taken into grade-level, team, and professional learning committee meetings to help ensure readiness and consistency in school-wide programs and initiatives, such as writing traits, fact fluency, comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, and problem-solving skills. Consistency in instruction across grades and curriculum, which provides common vocabulary and prior knowledge,

generates improvement in student and classroom performance, which, in turn, causes overall school effectiveness to improve.

Continuous, disaggregated data collection on local and standardized assessments enables teachers to determine if they are meeting the student and school goal expectations for learning. This data is also shared and analyzed, and this analysis of growth, or lack of growth, leads to interventions, changes in instruction, and professional development decisions, which help to accomplish improvement efforts. Periodic updating of surveys to gather information and data from students, parents, former students, high school teachers, and external stakeholders, also gives information for new goals to continue school improvement efforts.

Response to the results of this cycle of data collection, analysis, and changes in instructional strategies leads to increases in individual, classroom, and school performance in skills, standards, and goal areas.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

SJGS understands the importance of fostering positive relationships as a foundation for successful learning. From the moment students arrive at school, they are greeted warmly by teachers, administrators, and pastoral staff. The all-school assembly each morning allows the school to congregate as a community to celebrate birthdays and achievements, make announcements, and pray together. The school promotes community-building and respect for others through initiatives such as Family Groups, peer mediation, junior high peer mentoring, counselor-led grade-level programming, and the signature “St. Joe Way” initiative, a school-wide character-building program that challenges students, in a specific way each month, to grow as models of Christ.

Students and staff are routinely celebrated for achievements, outstanding efforts, and good works. Acknowledging students in distinct ways heightens their self-confidence and daily engagement. “Saints of the Week” for each classroom receive a special blessing at weekly school Mass. “Star Students,” nominated weekly by staff, are recognized for Christ-like behaviors or outstanding efforts. The school enjoys pep assemblies each trimester to recognize outstanding achievements in sports, extracurricular clubs, and other activities. SJGS also offers spirit days in which students are able to dress out of uniform and in school spirit attire. Through these rituals and initiatives, students feel a sense of family that creates a positive learning environment.

The SJGS behavior plan for grades K-5 begins on the first day of school where rules, or “God-Lines,” are written by the students in each class. Students that need support with God-Lines are provided time to stop and reflect about the behavior and, with guidance from teachers, make a plan to change the behavior. In junior high, the principal and assistant principal meet with each grade level to collaboratively establish junior high responsibilities. A contract is written and signed by students, parents, and teachers.

Reaching beyond the school day, students are further engaged with an extensive offering of extracurricular opportunities that help develop leadership and teamwork skills, promote self-confidence and friendship, and inspire personal betterment of mind and body. Offerings include Student Council, Chess Club, Boy and Girl Scouts, Quiz Bowl, Math Club, Strings, Band, Choir, drama, liturgical ministries, Adoration Club, Girls on the Run, and intramural and varsity sports.

Teachers are supported at SJGS in many ways. They are recognized as leaders by administration, and valuable members of the school community by families. Teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles on committees in order to collaboratively strive for excellence. Professional development support that is tailored to each individual teacher is critical to nurture each teacher’s strengths and support them in their areas of growth.

The parents offer continuous support and appreciation to teachers through an active Home and School Association whose initiatives include weekly “teacher treats,” several small receptions each year, and other surprises and tokens of appreciation. And, just as the students are recognized for positive actions, the weekly “Star Strategies” initiative provides an opportunity for peer recognition of staff members.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At SJGS, parents are recognized as the primary educators of their children, and they have numerous opportunities to engage directly with the school, including attending school Masses and morning prayer assemblies, parent appreciation events, parent education seminars, and a large variety of classroom and school celebrations and events. Parents also volunteer in classrooms, in the lunch room, and at recess; chaperone field trips and service projects; guide extracurricular activities; and facilitate school social events and fundraisers. The School Board and the Home and School Association offer parent leadership opportunities. A parent education group and a community building committee also exist to support parents as they strive to raise happy, healthy, and well-integrated children. In all of these engagement offerings,

SJGS seeks to embrace and utilize parents' gifts and talents in helping students and the school be successful. In turn, students feel supported and grow in confidence.

Communication is essential in working with family members for student success. Families are engaged and connected through weekly school email newsletters, active social media accounts, a dynamic website, individual teacher webpages, and email communications from classroom teachers. Parent-teacher conferences are offered twice yearly, and a parent survey is also administered. The administration team hosts four parent coffee hours each year to present on topics of interest and allow opportunity for open discussion.

Community partnerships are an integral part of the school's success. SJGS connects with local institutions of higher education, which include the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College. Many school parents work at these institutions and bring their unique skills and knowledge to school leadership groups. The universities also offer opportunities for professional development for teachers and administration. In turn, the school supports these local institutions by providing their students opportunities to learn from teachers and administration through classroom work and research.

SJGS also works closely with neighborhood organizations. An adjacent Catholic high school partners with SJGS to offer visits from high school students to share class projects, train eighth graders for a mentoring program, work in the afterschool program, and tutor grade school students. A neighborhood food co-op provides daily snacks for the afterschool program. Local community leaders visit the school to read to students during Read Across America. School-wide service-learning initiatives are highly regarded in the community, and allow students to learn about neighborhood support organizations while taking an active role in serving the needs of the community.

3. Professional Development:

The school's professional development approach is designed foremost to service the entire school staff as a collaborative team. In this approach, all staff members receive coordinated development so that language and learning are consistent throughout the school. This model is a more recent change of strategy to allow for better collaboration and teamwork by staff, resulting in more consistency and continuity in student learning paths. This collaborative method of professional development in turn coordinates with individual teacher growth goals. Teachers establish personal goals within the staff-wide professional development areas, with support from administration, helping to align their individual professional development with broader school goals. New teachers meet weekly with administration, and all teachers are observed each month with follow up conversations. Currently, primary areas of professional development are targeted on Kagan Cooperative Learning, technology in the classroom, the unique curriculum, and NWEA assessment and use of data.

Kagan Cooperative Learning provides teachers with additional tools and structures to support the exemplary curriculum that has been developed at SJGS. These implemented cooperative learning strategies provide students with targeted ways to work together to better understand material. Team-building methods create a positive environment in the classroom. Using these techniques, teachers have observed student engagement increase markedly.

For professional development on instituting new strategies for using technology in the classroom, SJGS is currently participating in whole-school training utilizing Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education tools. Learned techniques provide teachers with additional tools to implement differentiated and collaborative learning structures within the classroom, while offering opportunities to increase student engagement with dynamic learning tools.

With the potential of new staff each year, it has been critical to provide professional development on the SJGS curriculum and give new teachers the support they need to navigate the curriculum in order to keep the language and strategies consistent. New teachers receive two mentors for the year, one mentor who supports the new staff member with grade-level information and another mentor who guides the new staff through the components of the curriculum.

Finally, recent implementation of NWEA assessment has become a stimulating area of professional development for the staff. The school has found that real-time data collected from MAP testing is invaluable, and continues to learn how to leverage this information to support students in the classroom. Professional development, guided by trainers, revolves around the use of this data to help meet students where they are and adjust curriculum or provide support and enrichment resources where necessary.

All of these areas of professional development impact all grade levels, all content areas, and all areas of the school community. Instituting school-wide coordinated development ensures a consistent focus on maintaining the highest academic success for all students.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy is a collaborative model which engages representatives from each set of stakeholders within the school community. While every role is critical to the success of the school, the principal leads by example in collaboration with the parish pastor. This collaborative model allows for maximum input to guide continuous improvement and support student achievement. Examples of distinct groups and committees, which allow stakeholders to provide input as well as serve as solutions-oriented members, are described below.

Internally, the school is organized into multiple leadership teams. The Governance Committee, made up of school and parish administrators, reviews items that impact the community and student achievement from administrative and broad-based perspectives. The principal, assistant principal, and preschool director meet as the “A Team” to collaborate on matters such as curricular programming, staff management, and student affairs. The Staff Leadership Team is comprised of a teacher from each subsection of the staff. These teacher representatives serve as catalysts for collecting and disseminating information and as collaborators in school improvement. Finally, the Student Leadership Team, made up of students in grades five through eight, meets twice monthly with a goal of growing as leaders and providing input to administration to help make the school successful. Team members help lead the all-school prayer assembly each morning in addition to other initiatives throughout the year.

External stakeholders of the school community are engaged in leadership through three groups. The School Board is comprised of parents with diverse strengths that support the school’s mission and provide strategic direction. The board has instituted annual parent surveys that have provided invaluable feedback for informing decisions that directly affect students and families. The Home and School Association energizes and empowers parents to serve and support the school community by leading and facilitating community building activities, teacher appreciation initiatives, fundraising events, parent education programs, and other needed supports both inside and outside the classroom. Finally, the Parish Finance Council is composed of stakeholders from the school and parish that help guide decisions on school planning, budgeting, tuition, and financial aid, ensuring that the school manages resources wisely.

Throughout all of these leadership groups, the principal serves as a collaborator and colleague to help maintain a consistent purpose and focus on aligning decisions towards the mission of supporting student excellence and achievement in both mind and heart.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been most instrumental to success at SJGS is its literature-based curriculum. Over many years, through the collaborative work and support of a dedicated staff and administration, the teachers at SJGS have researched and trained in best practices that help students learn and excel.

In Language Arts, teachers are not bound by purchased textbooks. Rather, the curriculum is taught with units of study and exemplary texts. Teachers have developed the language arts curriculum with books that support the unit of study, individual reading levels, as well as the teachings of the Catholic Church. Each year the school librarian helps add new books to the curriculum as new ones are published. Teachers researched nine reading strategies that have been instrumental in fostering a love of reading and critical thinking by students. These strategies and the common vocabulary are used in all grades consistently. All grades teach writing through a consistent process while using the 6+1 traits as the common vocabulary. The consistency of language helps the students know and understand the components of good writing.

Science and social studies topics are integrated into the language arts curriculum. While there is a math textbook, it is supplemented with other enrichment programs to provide students with the best strategies to learn math skills and concepts.

Each year the faculty, with support of administration, meets and dialogues about units of study and, with collaboration from teachers in other curriculum areas, works together to integrate concepts and skills across disciplines. In conjunction with a shift from textbooks, SJGS also developed a standards-based report card. This allows for assessment of students with a variety of formative and summative checkpoints. Teachers are able to provide parents with precise reports of their child's mastery of state standards. Participation in state standardized testing provides information on how students perform state-wide, while the implementation of NWEA assessment has given teachers real-time data to inform adjustments to curriculum and to support resources for students. When new teachers become part of the SJGS family, they receive a curriculum coach to help them throughout the year. This coach is essential in helping ensure the understanding of curriculum and best practices, as well as consistency from grade to grade.

This unique and flexible curriculum, supplemented by new instructional strategies, has been fundamental to the success at Saint Joseph Grade School and has enabled students to achieve the highest levels of performance while growing into knowledgeable young men and women of virtue.

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? \$6316
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2906

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 43%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 93%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: NWEA

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Publisher:

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

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	213.7
Number of students tested	49
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	225.2
Number of students tested	51
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	234.3
Number of students tested	53
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	239
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	242.9
Number of students tested	36
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	248.4
Number of students tested	42
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	212.5
Number of students tested	49
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	222.4
Number of students tested	51
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	223
Number of students tested	53
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	223.8
Number of students tested	48
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	230.8
Number of students tested	36
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: N/A

Test: NWEA
Publisher:

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	232.2
Number of students tested	42
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: