

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 Ms. Cara Swinefurth

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

Official School Name Saint Thomas Aquinas School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4600 N Illinois Street

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

Indianapolis City IN State 46208-3522 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Marion

Telephone (317) 255-6244

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Web site/URL http://www.staindy.org

E-mail cswinefurth@staindy.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mrs. Gina Kuntz Fleming E-mail gfleming@archindy.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Indianapolis School District Tel. (317) 236-1430

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 Mr Andrew Purdie
(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	5	7	12
K	9	9	18
1	5	11	16
2	10	13	23
3	9	8	17
4	10	9	19
5	13	11	24
6	14	13	27
7	15	10	25
8	11	13	24
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	101	104	205

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 73 % White
 - 12 % 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: 2%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	210
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20 %
Total number students who qualify: 41

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
28 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</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: 7

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 11:1

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	99%	95%	98%	94%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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. 2005

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

With the combined efforts of the church, school families, and faculty, St. Thomas Aquinas School will guide a diverse student body toward becoming responsible, faith-filled, caring citizens, and independent learners.

PART III – SUMMARY

St. Thomas Aquinas School (STA) is a diverse, Christ-like community, which is committed to creating independent life-long learners and instilling Gospel values. It is the parish school of St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis, IN. The Sisters of Providence founded the school in 1941. In 1959 the gymnasium was built, allowing greater participation in physical education and CYO programs. In 2000, a major renovation occurred, adding a state-of-the-art science lab, extending kindergarten and differentiated learning space, adding office and teacher space, and connecting the school, parish offices and church together.

St. Thomas Aquinas School is a close-knit neighborhood school that values racial and ethnic diversity. The parents gravitate to this neighborhood because they want their children to grow up in a school that represents the real-life population. There are students and/or parents from 16 different countries. Enrollment typically averages 200-210 students per year. There is a broad socio-economic range of families. The majority of students are from middle class America with 25% of students on voucher or other financial assistance. STA has always provided some financial assistance. The participation in the Indiana Choice Scholarship has more than quadrupled in the past seven years. Upper middle-class families are also represented in the school / parish community.

There is one classroom per grade level preschool-8th grade. Students in preschool – 5th grade are in self-contained classrooms with teachers and push-in support personnel. Sixth – 8th grade students are organized as a middle school, switching classes for literature, English / language arts, math, science, social studies and religion. All students attend special area classes of music, art, physical education, technology, library and Spanish. The school's location is a strength for families from both an enrollment position and an experience angle. Illinois Street is a main thoroughfare to downtown, so parents are able to drop students off on their way to work. Also, there is a city bus stop located directly across the street, allowing students who need transportation to attend. Teachers also use the bus to take field trips throughout the community. There is easy access to Butler University, three blocks to the west, so students participate in both arts and outdoor programs there. The Indiana Governor's Residence is just one block away, giving the students an interesting perspective of the government as they see the Governor in the neighborhood, observe him voting at the STA polls and are occasionally invited to events on the lawn.

A particular focus of St. Thomas Aquinas School is to meet every child's needs through the Differentiated Learning Program (DLP). STA won the National SPICE award in 1991 for the DLP; the program has continued to grow and innovate over the past 25 years. There are two full-time teachers as well as an open part-time position on staff whose primary role is to coordinate with classroom teachers and work with students who have special learning needs (either above the grade level or below the grade level). Over 30% of STA students participate in this program: 13% have a diagnosed learning difference with a public school IEP that has been converted to a service plan with STA; another 17% of the student population is on the STA "watch list" due to specific reading, math or behavior concerns. Then there are those who are achieving above grade level. The groups are flexible, allowing for children to accelerate or receive support at various points during the year. No child is fixed on a particular track for the school year.

St. Thomas Aquinas School is known for academic excellence and providing a well-rounded Catholic education. Since receiving the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the US Department of Education in 2005, STA has continued to grow and innovate in curriculum and experiences for students, leading to many other acknowledgements over the years. In 2014, STA won the Green Ribbon School Award from the US Department of Education for environmental education (at that time, one of only two schools in Indiana, and one of only four Catholic schools in the nation). In 2017, STA won the Michelle Obama "Let's Move Active Schools" Award for the school's commitment to physical education and movement in the classroom. In 2018, STA was recognized at Masters level certification by Mayor Hogsett and Indianapolis Thriving Schools. In the past seven years, STA has steadily increased its ISTEP+ scores ranking from 8th place to 3rd place in the North Deanery, well above both the state and archdiocesan averages. In addition to academics, environmental education and religious instruction, students can participate in a wide-range of extracurricular activities including karate, flamenco dancing, chess club, CYO sports, drama, robotics and speech competitions to name a few.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

In the lower school (K-5) classroom teachers and learning support teachers work together on reading instruction. Whole group instruction is used to introduce and cover the grade level standards. Then small group instruction and learning centers are used to address individual student needs. These needs are determined by regular formative assessment, such as running records and comprehension quizzes as well as the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) test. Students also read books independently (within their zone of proximal development levels) and complete an Accelerated Reader (AR) quiz. Technology supports, such as Lexia Learning and IXL, aid in the differentiation of skills. Currently, the classroom teachers and learning support staff run twenty-five different reading groups each week. Special projects include readers' theatre and field trips to Butler University for performances.

In 6th-8th grade, students have two language arts periods, one focused on literature and one focused on English / writing. Of course, these areas overlap at various points. Learning standards are addressed through both explicit instruction, vocabulary study, novel studies, writing projects and project-based learning. Project-based learning allows students to develop skills in the curriculum in a way that maximizes deeper meaning. There is an array of pre-assessment and post-assessment strategies to gauge individual and group learning. Special projects include field trips to the Indiana Repertory Theatre, writing for the student newspaper, public speaking and writing books for faith partners.

1b. Mathematics:

The Indiana academic standards are used as a basis to plan math instruction but are merely a place to start. Real world connections and hands-on experiences are used to make curriculum accessible and challenging for all students. Math teachers find connections with science and other curricular areas to give a purpose to math. Students, starting in kindergarten, are taught with their abilities and interests in mind. All students have the opportunity to work in small groups with a teacher on an almost daily basis. The teacher is able to scaffold instruction to the needs of the students. Special projects include March Madness probability games, mini-economy for classroom management and BizTown (a Junior Achievement economics-focused project) experience.

In middle school, a combination of technology-based support, small groups, game play, and concrete examples are used to make concepts available to all students. Formative assessment, in the form of pre-tests, regularly used quizzes and quick checks are used to plan. If students have deficits in a particular concept found in a pre-test, the teachers can use resources that come with the curriculum to remediate in small groups or with technology-based resources. STAR testing is being implemented to track students longitudinally and help determine course placement and remediation needs. Special projects include stock market data projects, volleyball math with Butler University and BizTown experience.

Specific instruction takes place at all grade levels with regard to the mathematics process standards. Teachers understand that these standards are not content or knowledge, but rather how content, knowledge and skills should be used. One or more process standards is utilized in each math lesson because students can only develop these applications by participating regularly in rich problem solving.

1c. Science:

In the lower school (K-5) students receive their science instruction from the classroom teacher, then go to a dedicated science lab for hands-on lab experience. The “Lab Ladies” are retired scientists from the community (Eli Lilly and Company) who have committed to teaching real-life science skills to the students. Lab instruction always includes an age appropriate writing component. Science lab in grades K-5 addresses the state standards using music, movement, writing, drawing, games and guided experimental activities, and

has a focus on the natural world. Students experience the scientific method beginning in kindergarten with guided inquiry. As students get older, they start developing their own questions and procedures within the context of the topic being studied. Science lab curriculum draws from multiple sources, allowing for greater flexibility and challenging activities. Special projects include endangered animal habitats, caring for chickens, visiting Butler University prairie and conducting a river health assessment at a local park.

Grades 6-8 meet in the science lab every class period with the science teacher. The Indiana academic standards are the basis of instruction and are correlated with the new textbook series that was adopted. There are many instructional strategies implemented: close reading, cooperative learning, cueing, questioning, direct instruction, discover / inquiry-based learning, generating / testing hypotheses, graphic organizers, integrating content areas, peer teaching and collaboration. Instructional technology is used primarily for students in the process of their work (research, virtual science labs, collecting data) or to show their completed work (Google Suite, lab reports, slideshows). The assessments (quizzes and tests) show which students need extra science support and which students need more challenging material, as well as indicate when students have mastered critical concepts. Special projects include Invention Convention, Science Fair, dissection and Engineering Challenge.

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

For students in grades K – 5, the academic standards for social studies align from close to broad. Kindergarteners focus on people in their family, then 1st graders learn about school and neighborhood, etc., continuing on through community, state and country. Teachers activate prior knowledge, scaffold, conduct discussions, assign small group projects or independent reading / note-taking, to name a few strategies. Student work is focused on a similar theme, but work is adjusted for choice, learning style and learning differences. Teachers meet with students individually to provide support. A variety of formative and summative assessments are used, such as exit tickets, check-ins, and chapter / unit tests. Special projects include living wax museum, saint presentations, BizTown (a Junior Achievement economics-focused project) and field trips.

In the upper school (6-8) social studies / history includes American history, world history, geography and current events, oriented toward social justice. Students are coached through identifying what they already know about a topic or event. Then the teacher scaffolds activities that are designed to guide the students in mastery of a particular standard. Instructional strategies include explicit instruction (lectures and class discussions), technology-based support or home-based research to enrich the study, videos and problem-based learning to explore complex topics (such as immigration, environmental issues, current events, etc.). Special projects include world fair, mock trial, BizTown (a Junior Achievement economics-focused project) and the 8th grade trip to Washington, DC.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

STA was encouraged for years to open a preschool program for parish and school families. The core curriculum areas provided are social-emotional, spiritual, academic (early literacy, math, science, social studies), the arts and physical development, based on Indiana academic standards for early childhood education. The curriculum is aligned to K-3 academic standards by incorporating areas of readiness as provided by kindergarten staff, such as awareness of letters, pencil grip, printed name, rhyming concepts, rote counting, etc. Social readiness and independence are a priority, including raising hand to ask a question, recognizing personal space, walking in a line and zipping own coat. Although the STA preschool program is only in its second year, parents and teachers report that our students have transitioned easily from preschool to kindergarten. Students are meeting or exceeding expectations in the kindergarten program.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Art: All students (Pre-8) have art class for one hour every week. STA uses the Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) approach. Students have the opportunity to choose projects, creating and completing them in a studio area. Students research, write a project proposal with a sketch, and write a reflection when the project is complete. They experience success in a creative environment by not giving into failure. In the art studios the students learn to work with mistakes by pushing through them and creating a finished piece of art. This is aligned to the growth mindset philosophy. Special projects include annual art show, variety of contests and Day of the Dead display. STA students have won city-wide contests and have their art displayed in the community.

Library: Students in preschool – 6th grade attend a scheduled library class weekly. The primary focus of the STA library class is to develop a love and interest in the written word. The motto of the library is “those who read will succeed.” The children walk away knowing that reading is the foundation of all areas of learning. The librarian plans illustrator and author studies as well as helps each child find the perfect book. Students engage in additional research connected to the classroom, such as subject background, inter-connected curriculum and identifying works that follow similar themes. Additionally, students have the opportunity to hear authors come speak at STA or to visit and attend outside venues and performances related to the literary works. Seventh and 8th grade students have access to the library on an individual basis. Kindergarten through 8th grade have the chance to participate in the STA school-wide literacy initiative, Book It! (sponsored by Pizza Hut).

Music: Students in preschool – 8th grade attend music class once per week. The curriculum includes music history and appreciation, music theory and basic vocal and instrumentation. Participating in music education helps students develop confidence, self-presentation, creativity, empathy and compassion. It is a medium for self-expression as well as teaches perseverance and diligence. Special projects include the Advent concert and the annual spring musical.

Physical Education / Health: Students in grades K-8 meet with the PE teacher twice per week (preschool once per week). The curriculum is based on the state standards, focusing on team building and leadership activities throughout the year. Students learn healthy habits, games and friendly competition. In PE the slanted rope theory is utilized to allow all students a challenge. Once a week the PE classes have a station day which offers multiple activities at many different skill levels for students to experience. Each station activity has multiple variations available, depending on the needs of the students. Grades 6-8 have a dedicated health class once per week. The health program utilizes the Lifeskills program focusing on emotional health, resolving conflicts, stress management and making healthy decisions (drugs, alcohol, vaping, etc.). Healthy food choices are taught in PE, health class and during lunch by the health teacher. Special projects include the annual dance program and Health & Wellness Week.

Spanish: Students in grades Pre-5 meet for Spanish class 60-80 minutes per week, instructed by a native speaker. They are introduced to vocabulary and conversation through songs, games and projects. There is also a focus on the variety of Spanish culture. Throughout the grade levels, the curriculum builds for language acquisition. Students in grades 6-8 continue their Spanish instruction, adding on reading and writing skills. They meet in class for 80-120 minutes per week. The Spanish teacher presents other aspects of instruction through after-school Spanish Club and flamenco dance lessons.

Technology: STA focuses on creating responsible digital citizens through technology instruction. Students in K – 5th grade have a tech lab class each week. The curriculum focuses on internet safety and boundaries, Google Suite, coding, keyboarding and web literacy (navigation / research). Students publish their work in digital media, spreadsheets and presentations. These tasks allow students the opportunity develop critical thinking, communication skills, structured problem solving and digital citizenship. Students in grades 6-8 have 1:1 Chromebooks, allowing their tech instruction to be embedded in the core academic classes.

3. Special Populations:

STA serves an academically diverse population of learners, ranging from students performing one to two years below grade level to those performing one to two years above grade level. With only one class per grade level, classroom teachers and learning support teachers must collaborate to meet the needs of all students. STA employs a strong Response to Intervention (RTI) system to remediate students in specific skills and content. Specific content strategies are used by the classroom teacher and learning support teachers in small groups or one-to-one intervention. For example, students in kindergarten and 1st grade who struggle with sounds in isolation and/or blending C-V-C words receive individual help with an Orton-Gillingham trained teacher. If deemed necessary, students are referred for educational testing; if the results determine additional intervention is needed, the learning support team will write an Individual Service Plan (ISP) or Catholic Service Plan (CSP), ensuring the student receives the required services and accommodations for success. It must be highlighted that STA intervenes with students early, offering one-to-one assistance before they have a formalized education plan.

For students who qualify, there is a Title 1 tutor available both during the school day as well as after school. The Title 1 tutor communicates with the classroom teachers to address student needs. Some of the strategies used include shared reading/modeling, utilizing Learning Ally app for books read aloud to help with pacing, fluency and comprehension, teaching sight word fluency to build early literacy skills, using Explode the Code (research-based, multi-sensory program geared to improving literacy with direct, systematic, and phonics instruction), math fact fluency, using various math manipulatives for reteaching to see math concepts in a new way, reviewing and reteaching math vocabulary, using think-alouds while reviewing math concepts and utilizing Pearson Realize intervention lessons that scaffold classroom concepts. Having this additional layer of support ensures all students are successful.

For students working above grade level, classroom teachers differentiate instruction by first ensuring that the grade level content and skills are mastered, and then challenging the student to extend their skills or take content to a deeper level. For example, math students are asked to solve their problems in more than one way; social studies students research complex topics; and most projects are open-ended, allowing for more challenging work beyond a minimum requirement. The technology-based support programs of Lexia and IXL allow for higher grade level standards to be introduced and practiced for those students who are ready. Teachers offer opportunities to extend the learning in the community, such as guest speakers, special events and field trips. Additionally, STA provides a number of academic enrichment programs for student participation, such as Academic Olympics, Chess Club, Future Problem Solvers, Robotics, Newspaper and Speech competitions.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

STA strives to develop a community of learners where every student feels accepted and valued for her or his unique identity. One of the strengths of a small school is that every adult knows almost every child. The student body meets together as a family every morning for morning assembly (led by the 7th graders). Praying together, hearing a scripture reading and reciting the mission statement sets the intention for the day. Throughout the school day, students are supported by caring teachers and positive peers. There are multiple support systems in place to allow for students to receive individual attention, such as teacher office hours, study halls, personal responsibility time and interaction with the social worker. The social worker meets with every new student, various individuals for direct support and classes to build social-emotional skills.

Research shows the most influential people in the school are the teachers. It is a priority that STA teachers feel valued and supported in their work. Through shared leadership, teachers have a significant amount of autonomy in determining the curriculum, procedures and policies. Additionally, they are highly supported by the Parents' Association who sponsors annual innovation grants, Teacher Appreciation Week, book fair, and classroom supply stipends. The PA also provides parent volunteers for special activities and field trips.

The core of the STA climate and culture is being grounded in the Catholic faith. The school community celebrates Mass together each week, often welcoming parishioners and students from Butler University. The religion curriculum focuses on Catholic identity and social justice practices. Students and teachers have multiple opportunities to serve each other and the greater community through service projects and service hours. Disability Awareness Week, coordinated with the Joseph Maley Foundation, underscores the implicit acceptance and value of every person encountered in the school.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

STA families are engaged at the school level as well as the greater community level. Regular communication through the weekly school-wide newsletter (School Scoops) and the classroom newsletter keep parents aware of school details. STA conducts a "Celebration Mass" the last week of the month, announcing student accomplishments for all to applaud. School accomplishments and needs are communicated to the parish and wider audience through a quarterly newsletter. The school also posts regularly to Facebook to connect with parents, friends and alumni.

The Parents' Association is an important connector for families at STA. Their mission includes providing communication between the school and students' families; providing enrichment opportunities for parents and children; providing family support (meals, uniforms and transportation) in times of crisis; fostering parish, community and business support for the school; and providing financial assistance to STA students as needed. The school is stronger through parent and family involvement, so there are multiple ways for parents to volunteer, such as helping in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, serving lunch and coordinating special events, to name a few.

STA engages the community in a number of ways. Partnerships with Peace Learning Center, IPS 43 elementary school and the Joseph Maley Foundation help students develop social-emotional skills. Classroom teachers host preservice teachers from Butler University, Marian University and University of Indianapolis. In addition, work study students from Butler are employed in the STA After Care program and as tutors. Finally, the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood would not be the same without the annual STA Sausagefest, a weekend of family, friends and fun every August.

3. Professional Development:

STA's professional development plan is made up of three facets: school improvement based on student data, teacher improvement based on evaluations and self-reflection and a climate focus based on

community feedback.

Based on the ISTEP+ data, a school improvement goal for English / language arts was created: All students will improve conventions of standard English in their writing. Students will work to master grade level appropriate conventions of standard English and apply those skills and rules in their written expression. To that end, teachers are meeting in professional development “Cluster” times to coordinate vertical alignment of standards to strengthen the curriculum. Several teachers have attended the Smekens workshops and implemented a variety of strategies in their classrooms. The results of implementation are brought back to Cluster and reviewed, with the teachers providing feedback and expertise to each other, and then refinements are made before the next lesson.

STA teachers are evaluated using a rubric from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. After self-reflection and a conference with the principal, all teachers are encouraged to attend professional development to help them, individually, become even better at the art of teaching. There are numerous opportunities throughout the school year to attend workshops and also to attend more in-depth classes in the summer. This professional development is paid for through a grant from the federal government.

In cooperation with the Race and Culture Committee of the parish, STA has had a climate focus of cultural competency. The school is participating in a cultural audit, implicit bias training with Peace Learning Center, small group book studies and guest speakers to improve cultural awareness and promote racial equity in the school. This goal was determined based on feedback from students, parents and staff members as an area for growth.

4. School Leadership:

At STA the principal is the head administrator of the school. While the principal enjoys daily autonomy in the administration of the school, she reports to the parish pastor regularly, who advises her on the spiritual focus of the school. The School Commission, made up of school parents, parishioners and a young alumna, is an advisory body to the principal. They have areas of expertise, such as finance, marketing and technology, to help advance the strategic plan of the school.

STA has a practice of shared leadership with the principal and a teacher leadership team. The teacher leadership team is made up of a representative from grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and special area classes, along with the assistant principal. This team meets regularly with the principal to discuss data, planning, policies and concerns. The outcomes of these meetings are shared with the full faculty for review before implementation. Every teacher has access to student data and resources. All decisions are viewed through the lens of student achievement and the school’s mission statement.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

St Thomas Aquinas School employs multiple impactful strategies to make students successful. However, the one practice that has been the most instrumental is the philosophy of honoring the dignity of every child. We welcome all students who we are able to serve, respecting their distinctive strengths and challenges. Each child enrolled in STA is seen as a unique, valued member of the community to be cherished and admired. The mission statement focuses the school practice on developing the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially and physically.

Each morning, STA students and teachers meet for morning assembly led by 7th graders. We pray together, listen to a short scripture reading and recite our mission statement together. This focuses our minds and hearts on the goals for the day – to grow! Along with regular religion instruction and weekly Mass, STA students are paired with another student (older/younger) as a faith partner. This allows each of our students to develop deeper relationships, nurturing and mentoring a schoolmate. STA Parish has a true heart for social justice. This is reflective in the school as students are engaged in Catholic Social Teaching projects and service to the community.

To address academic development, teachers develop a classroom environment and climate that is child-centered. The curriculum sets high expectations, while teaching strategies provide support for learning differences, such as scaffolding, choices and cooperative learning. Through the lens of growth mindset, students (and teachers) are seen as always moving forward, continuously building understanding and context. All students are the responsibility of all teachers: classroom, special areas, and learning support staff. This shared concern ensures that every student receives the expertise and assistance necessary for success.

An essential area for growth is social-emotional learning. STA is committed to developing the whole child and as such see it as a significant goal to teach problem-solving, conflict resolution, assertiveness and tools to advocate for a student's own needs. A preschool – 8th grade structure allows for long-term stable relationships to develop between peers and adults. When challenges arise, students are disciplined with dignity, focused on teaching the skills needed for success in life.

An area often overlooked in school is the physical development of children, as if maybe this occurs somewhere outside the school building. However, if children are not comfortable in their body, they cannot learn. STA works to balance physical needs with spiritual, academic and social needs. Simple practices like letting children eat / drink when hungry (not just on a schedule), making sure every child gets outdoor time each day through recess and neighborhood walks, and providing alternative seating in the forms of ball chairs, wobble stools and desk cycles allow for students to take care of their physical needs and be healthy. Additionally, the curriculum includes a focus on mental health stability – mindfulness, attention, relaxation, stress reduction, etc.

At St Thomas Aquinas we see students as unique, and use best practices to address and meet the needs of all students.

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? \$8100
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1067

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 18%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 87%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: ISTEP+

Grade: 3

Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Publisher: Pearson

**Scores are reported here
as:** Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	78
Number of students tested	18
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	79
Number of students tested	24
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	93
Number of students tested	29
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Test: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	81
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	84
Number of students tested	25
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	75
Number of students tested	24
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 3
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	100
Number of students tested	18
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 4
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	83
Number of students tested	24
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 5
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	96
Number of students tested	29
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Test: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 6
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	96
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	100
Number of students tested	25
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: ISTEP+
Publisher: Pearson

Grade: 8
Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	83
Number of students tested	24
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: