

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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	93	89	182
8	74	98	172
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	167	187	354

*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
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 2 % 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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	358
(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, Tigrina, Arabic, Dinka, Vietnamese, Polish, Amharic, Filipino

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %
 Total number students who qualify: 29

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
9 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>27</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 8

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.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 17:1

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	96%	95%	95%	96%	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.

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

To form a community of faith and learning by promoting a Catholic way of life through Gospel values and academic excellence.

PART III – SUMMARY

In 1998 O’Gorman Junior High School opened its doors as the consolidated junior high school for the Sioux Falls Catholic School System, bringing together the best of the faculty and staff from what had been two parish junior high schools. O’Gorman Junior High School established itself early on as a school of academic excellence and co-curricular success. Since opening, the school has expanded its facility twice to accommodate a growing enrollment. Comprised of approximately 360 students from six Catholic elementary schools, the public middle schools and the area surrounding Sioux Falls, the school seeks to develop the whole person - mind, body, and spirit. This development centers around the mission, “...to form a community of faith and learning by promoting a Catholic way of life through gospel values and academic excellence.”

O’Gorman Junior High School’s enrollment encompasses a variety of ethnicities and cultures including a growing Sudanese population. Instructional programs have evolved throughout the years to meet the various learners’ needs. The seven Catholic parishes of Sioux Falls support the Sioux Falls Catholic Schools with 50% of their ordinary income. This support, along with over \$200,000 of financial assistance given annually to students, makes attendance at the school realistic for families of all income levels.

Students who attend O’Gorman Junior High School are exposed to a rigorous and well-rounded curriculum. In addition to the core curriculum of social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, and theology, students also take elective and exploratory courses including exploring music, literature, art, world language, speech and debate, physical education, health, and career exploration. Students have an opportunity to earn up to seven high school credits in their eighth grade year including Algebra I, geometry, advanced geometry, biology, advanced biology, world geography, Spanish I, German I, and computer applications. 70% of all students will enter high school with at least one high school credit.

Co-curricular programs are viewed as an integral part of the total educational program and help supplement the mission of the school. Over 90% of students are involved in co-curricular activities related to music, athletics, or service clubs. Students have the opportunity to participate at the middle school level in football, volleyball, boys and girls basketball, track, and cross-country. They have further opportunities to compete at the varsity high school level in gymnastics, wrestling, golf and tennis. City championships are awarded at the eighth grade level in six sports. Since opening, O’Gorman Junior High has won ninety-two city athletic championships, competing against students from five public middle schools with triple the enrollment. Additionally, many participate in music programs including choir, show choir, worship team, concert band, jazz band, and orchestra, with opportunities for individual lessons and competitions in both vocal and instrumental music. Throughout the years, a number of students have won middle school all-state honors in choir, band, and orchestra. This past year, the 7th grade band was named a top middle school band in the state and was selected to perform at the South Dakota Bandmasters Convention. Other activities for student participation include peer tutoring, student council, quiz bowl, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), Students for Life, and robotics. In 2018 the O’Gorman Junior High Robotics Team was crowned South Dakota State Champions and captured the Overall Project Award at the national competition in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Students live out the mission “...to form a community of faith...” through their theology courses and their completion of at least twelve hours of volunteer service each year in the greater Sioux Falls community. Collectively, the school provides over 5,000 hours of volunteer service annually. The school sponsors a competition between classes as part of the annual city-wide food drive, collecting over 12,000 pounds of non-perishable food items last year. The school earned the award for "most pounds collected" among the middle schools in the area.

O’Gorman Junior High School is proud to have a highly qualified teaching staff committed to academic excellence and safety in the school. All of the faculty members have achieved “highly qualified status” through the state department of education, and over half have advanced degrees. Through intense data analysis, differentiated instruction, and high expectations, the faculty ensures every student achieves success. The school has adopted the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) philosophy and program, which provides

students extra time and assistance to engage all students in the learning process. The ICU's philosophy "every student completes every assignment" has further enhanced the school's culture of learning and accountability.

The community of faith and academic excellence would not be possible without the involvement and commitment of the numerous stakeholders. Efforts to maintain and continue this quest for excellence are reflected in the strategic planning sessions focused on the areas of community relations, programs, and finance. In addition, a parent advisory board meets regularly to discuss different events, provide input, and to be a non-policy making "sounding board" to the principal. They also provide planning and organizational assistance for many of the activities that are held to enhance the educational environment for students and staff.

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Students are required to take a full year of language arts at each grade level. In addition, students take an extra quarter of an exploratory literature class for more emphasis on developing strong reading skills. At each grade level, courses are offered for students with varying ability levels. Each year of language arts aligns with and exceeds the expectations of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts.

Students are taught the analytical skills necessary for the type of close reading of both fiction and nonfiction that is required at the high school and college level. Recent changes involve an increased emphasis on nonfictional reading at all grade levels combined with the traditional comprehensive study of literature from the various genres of fiction, poetry, and drama. A strong emphasis has been placed on close reading skills in order to best interpret and understand complex text. In addition to literature taught and discussed in class, additional independent reading requirements exist each quarter at every grade level and ability level. The goal of the independent reading requirement is to create life-long readers. Student engagement is promoted through round-table discussions, student choice on independent novel selections, presentations, and online collaboration assessments.

Research, expository and persuasive writing, and literary analysis are emphasized throughout the grade levels. All language arts teachers have been trained on the 6-Trait Writing evaluation, and these teachers have led the professional development to train all faculty so that the 6-Trait model is used as a consistent evaluation tool for writing across the curriculum. Daily, weekly, and quarterly writing assessments build a portfolio of writing that follows the student to high school. Grammar instruction is an important component of the curriculum at each grade level.

1b. Mathematics:

O’Gorman Junior High’s math curriculum offers a variety of courses designed to meet the needs of students of varying ability levels. The curriculum for all math courses includes an emphasis on developing problem solving skills, applying math skills to real life situations, and improving reasoning skills. Through the use of manipulatives and models, along with engaging experiments that apply new learned concepts, students are able to be hands-on with their learning. Students are taught appropriate use of technology to aid in their understanding of mathematical concepts. Students have exposure to a flipped classroom approach at the 7th grade level, and all math teachers have developed online video tutorials. This concept allows teachers to devote more class time to checking for understanding and answering questions than the traditional classroom approach. The instruction in the classroom represents the blend of traditional instruction with the use of more guided practice, inquiry based learning, collaboration, and critical thinking activities.

All math instructors employ the eight mathematical practices into their instruction. The focus is on incorporating the Eight Standards of Mathematical Practice into daily instruction while not lessening the emphasis on mastering basic mathematical skills.

1c. Science:

7th grade science focuses on life science while 8th grade science students study physical science as outlined by state standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The science curriculum includes foundational vocabulary and moves into laboratory work and inquiry based instruction. Students learn laboratory safety rules and advance to more complex labs including dissection as the year progresses. Experiments focus on collaboration and utilize a variety of resources. Intentional STEM integration provides the students authentic experiences by advancing the learning of concepts and furthering their knowledge of careers in the field. Each year, 8th grade girls attend the annual South Dakota Women in Science Conference which explores

careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Advanced students have the opportunity to take biology for high school credit.

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

The social studies curriculum focuses on world geography in 7th grade and U.S. History in 8th grade as outlined by state standards. Foundational skills in world geography are taught through the five themes of geography, while U.S. History formulates courses of study around essential questions which stimulate thought and inquiry. Both courses have a strong emphasis on citizenship and economics and how these have evolved throughout history. The social studies teachers work with the language arts teachers on interdisciplinary units of study. The social studies teachers have a strong emphasis on reading with informational text utilizing primary source documents and current event topics. Student engagement is brought to life through local experts in social science fields and further enhanced through interactive classroom tools such as Google Earth, Google Maps, and Nearpod. All students in history, participate in a year-long "History of Me" project in which they research their family lineage and how that impacts them as a person today.

1e. For secondary schools:

The results of the ACT Aspire are measured in reference to the ACT Career Readiness Standards which indicates the skills and knowledge students need to become ready for college and career. This provides an effective benchmark across the core content areas.

O’Gorman Junior High 8th grade students take a course called career exploration. This class is an introduction to peer relations, personal finance, college and career planning. Students study and have constructive dialogue surrounding the book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. Students also investigate SDMyLife which is an online program assisting students with the career development process. Professionals from the community are invited to speak to the class about their careers and the impact they have on the community as a whole.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

1. Arts:

Courses in the visual and performing arts focus on developing skills and cultivating an appreciation for the arts. Art is offered as an exploratory class in both grades and focuses on drawing, painting, architecture, and sculpture. Various levels of courses exist in the areas of instrumental music (band and orchestra), vocal music, and the visual arts. Classroom instruction combined with performances and competitions allow students to build a foundation for further studies in all areas of the arts. A competitive show choir and jazz band also exist as co-curricular activities. 7th grade students take exploring music class which integrates the playing of instruments such as ukuleles with the latest of today’s music technologies.

2. Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:

Physical Education and Health classes combine physical activity with a curriculum designed to help students grow in mind, body, and spirit. The curriculum incorporates lessons about how to build and maintain healthy relationships, develop lifetime fitness goals, and to build healthy nutrition habits. The health curriculum has been approved to fulfill the state’s high school requirement for health. All students take a semester of health and physical education each year.

3. Foreign Language:

All seventh graders are required to take a world language class. World language is a nine week exploratory course that has an emphasis on developing an appreciation for the Spanish and German language and culture. 70% of 8th graders take a full year of Spanish I or German I for high school credit. The curriculum in the foreign language courses focus on the language skills of listening, reading comprehension, speaking,

and writing.

4. Technology/Library/Media:

All students in both 7th and 8th grade take a semester-long technology course, and nearly half of 8th graders take Computer Applications for high school credit. Students in the technology classes develop problem solving skills through coding and the use of circuitry hardware. Internet skills and safety, website design, data basis, and computer literacy are also areas of focus. The school is designated a Google “G-Suite” school which serves as a platform for student-to-student and student-to-teacher communication, collaboration, and access of files. The library serves as the school’s hub for research and collaboration. Students see this as not only a space to check out books, but also a critical learning commons for the school.

5. Additional Curricular Area:

One particular discipline sets O’Gorman Junior High apart from other excellent academic programs. The curricular requirements at the school include a theology class at each grade level. This requirement emphasizes the belief that the theology curriculum is integral to the school’s mission to form a community built on academic excellence and “Gospel values”. Parish priests and school board members are quick to point out that this additional component to the mission statement is indeed the school’s purpose for existence.

The element of stewardship is deeply ingrained into the students’ spiritual lives. Every student completes three hours of Christian Service each quarter. In addition to these individual hours, the school hosts numerous service projects throughout the year. At Thanksgiving, students create and send thank-you cards and host a prayer service for military personnel serving overseas. At Christmas, students take part in a school-wide competition based on collecting nonperishable food for the Sioux Falls Food Bank. During the Lenten Season, donations are collected for the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl Project. Students also volunteer at the St. Francis House for the homeless. With the service projects and individual service hours, O’Gorman Junior High students contribute over 5,000 volunteer hours each academic year.

8th graders also take part in an annual retreat off campus with direction provided by priests and other spiritual leaders. The focus of this day is to help students live their faith on a daily basis. Campus Ministry Core Team Members from the high school lead small group discussions, and time is spent in quiet reflection and contemplation.

The curricular program, Theology of the Body for Middle School Students, is an essential component of the theology curriculum. This curriculum forms the basis for the study of adolescent sexuality as it relates to each person’s spirituality. The goal is to help adolescents see the connection between the physical changes they are undergoing and God’s plan for them as people.

3. Special Populations:

The use of supported classes (smaller class size with support of an additional teacher or aide) for core subject areas along with the advanced offerings assure students will find course selections designed for their ability level. Students who are below grade level in math and reading are enrolled in an additional math and language arts/reading class during the school day. Here, online personalized programs coupled with small group instruction creates a blended and personalized learning approach where individual skills are addressed. This additional time is used to re-teach and support the original lesson that was taught earlier in the day. Regular online diagnostics are administered in order to view progress and to adjust future lessons.

Students who have a diagnosed disability and need help with organization, prioritizing work, and or study skills during their study hall time are placed in Study Center. Here, students are able to thrive in a small class setting with a 2:1 student to staff ratio.

A system is in place to help students who are not successful with grade level curriculum. Grade level meetings are held regularly to identify students who may need academic assistance. If a student is identified, they enter a tiered system that begins with evaluating and documenting current teaching practices for four weeks. If the student continues to perform poorly, they move on to a second tier that focuses on the

implementation of specific, research-based interventions for four to six weeks. If a student continues to struggle, interventions are either reassessed or they may be referred to professional testing. If an official diagnosis is made, the student may qualify for accommodations or modifications. This is done while keeping parents informed with student assistant team meetings.

The Academic Services Department serves the needs of a wide range of students with everything from peer tutoring to adaptive technology designed to assist students with various disabilities and challenges to learning. FASTT Math and Fast ForWord are used to assist students who struggle with math instruction in the regular classroom. AlphaSmart and Google Extensions are used for students experiencing fine motor issues. Students also utilize the Academic Service room for individualized educational plan components including oral testing, alternative settings for testing, etc. Students who qualify are offered modified assessments.

Students who score above grade level in the areas of math and language arts are placed in an enriched version of the course. These classes are designed to challenge the students with increased rigor, depth, and coursework. Students are required to read more challenging texts, along with completing a number of critical thinking projects throughout the year. If a student exceeds the academic offerings of the junior high, parents and administration may agree to have the students take some classes at the system's high school. Each year, O’Gorman Junior High has upwards of 12-14 students who will take advanced geometry, advanced biology, or upper level Spanish or German at the high school.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

O’Gorman Junior High School utilizes surveys from both students and parents in order to gauge school culture. Each October, a peer relations survey is administered to all students. This survey focuses on the quality of respect that is present in the school. A peer relations team at the school studies the results and provides a goal and action plan on how to improve overall peer relations in the school. In the spring of the year, a survey is provided to all parents in order to gauge the overall effectiveness of the programming, communication, and culture.

Student morale is of strong importance at the school. One way the school shows appreciation to students is by mailing postcards to individual students noting their successes. Each month, teachers send at least two postcards to students noting their appreciation of something the student achieved or how he/she acted. The school is intentional ensuring staff members are present at the co-curricular events in which students participate in. Teachers are trained to deliver lessons that incorporate today’s technology and make the lessons relevant to their students’ lives. The school utilizes a monthly virtue in order to emphasize character building and promote positive decision-making. The school participates in a Courage Retreat with the 7th grade students which promotes students to follow their hearts instead of the crowd and to make responsible decisions despite their fears. In the 8th grade, a spiritual retreat focuses on living their faith now and beyond.

O’Gorman Junior High utilizes a homework completion program and philosophy known as ICU. ICU's general philosophy is that if students are completing the practice assigned by the teacher, then they are more likely to learn. ICU has been instrumental helping students complete their studies when they may fall behind. Teachers work with students before and after school to help complete the work. The goal of the program is to help shape the students into responsible independent workers. Students have found the ICU program to be a positive place that supports them getting back on track as learners. The school is proud of the 100% completion rate on all homework assignments.

An atmosphere of open communication is emphasized in an effort to maintain the sense of community among faculty and staff. The principal utilizes “Caught in the Act” cards for staff so that they can recognize each other for going above and beyond. A faculty book club meets each month to discuss a chosen book and to build community and relationships. A building leadership team meets monthly and provides suggestions and areas of improvement for the building administrator.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

O’Gorman Junior High’s mission statement begins with the words, “to form a community of faith and learning...” These words form the basis of the relationship between the school and its families. A detailed transition plan for new students, which includes parent information meetings and student visits, begin in January and carries into the spring and summer months. Prior to the school year starting, new students attend "Welcome to Junior High" where students learn the intricacies of being in a junior high setting.

O’Gorman Junior High has numerous vehicles in place that serve to keep families informed and involved during the junior high school experience. Parents receive a monthly newsletter, weekly e-mail updates, and daily announcements posted on the website. Twitter is used as another avenue to communicate with families, along with celebrating student successes. The grade portal and an online “Class Assignments” page allow parents to view daily assignments and to monitor grades. Within the ICU program, parent contact is made on a daily basis of any student who is missing any work. An annual parent survey allows parents the opportunity to give feedback to the school on a wide range of topics. A parent advisory board meets monthly with the principal to coordinate volunteer opportunities which include tutoring, serving on committees, and assisting with school events throughout the year. Representatives from this board will hold positions on system level committees ranging from Programs to Community Relations to Development. The O’Gorman Junior High Praying Parents meet weekly for a book study led by the school chaplain.

Each year, the school hosts business and community leaders through Junior Achievement of South Dakota for a full day of lessons from the business community. These individuals teach lessons from their respective job fields in order to help students understand how to succeed in a global marketplace. The involvement of Junior Achievement offers the students educational experiences that further enhance the school's focus on real-life application and higher level thinking skills.

Partnerships in the health and fitness area provide guidance and support. The school has a volunteer nursing program in which nurses from the community volunteer their time to tend to students who become hurt or ill throughout the school day. The University of Sioux Falls nursing program performs health screenings to students, in addition to providing health fairs and instructional lessons to the students during health class. Avera Health provides a sports and fitness conditioning program in the school gym during the summer months. These partnerships have proven to be valuable resources to the school as they help promote the health, wellness, and nutrition to the students.

3. Professional Development:

O’Gorman Junior High School utilizes a professional development committee composed of faculty members and administrators to plan school-wide professional development opportunities based on established student performance goals. School-wide professional development opportunities have focused on areas including integrating technology in the classroom, raising the rigor through higher level questioning in assessment (both formative and summative) and instruction, incorporating 21st century learning strategies in the classroom, and differentiating instruction. Seven full days a year are devoted to these school-wide development opportunities.

O’Gorman Junior High School also emphasizes individual teacher growth and development and devotes time and resources accordingly. Professional collaboration time is built into each teacher’s daily schedule. In addition, all academic departments meet with the curriculum coordinator to discuss curricular concerns and to target necessary adjustments to the core curriculum. These meetings are in addition to full curricular reviews which take place on a regularly scheduled basis. Monthly faculty meetings also focus on reviewing progress toward school goals.

An organized peer coaching program exists, providing professional development and mentoring to all teachers in their first two years in the profession. This program pairs novice teachers with an experienced teacher in their discipline who functions as their Peer Coach throughout the program. The program utilizes Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching as the basis for assisting new teachers in their professional development. Peer observation, weekly collaboration and monthly large group sessions are all part of this program. A separate mentoring program provides additional assistance for beginning teachers.

Faculty members also establish annual individual professional development goals as part of the Faculty Professional Growth Plan. All faculty members are allowed two professional development days each academic year to pursue opportunities related to their specific professional development goals.

Faith formation is part of the in-service days. Recent topics have included the new evangelization, a spiritual inventory with charisms, and recent societal developments and the impact on Catholic Education. All faculty members are provided with two spiritual days each year in order to take advantage of retreat and prayer opportunities. Any faculty member who teaches theology also participates in a professional development program call the Institute of Religious Studies (IRS). IRS provides teachers the Catechism of the Catholic Church—a summary of what Catholics throughout the world believe in common. Additionally, other book studies are provided to faculty including one recently focused on Pope Francis’ The Joy of Love.

4. School Leadership:

The school mission statement “...to form a community of faith and learning...” forms the basis of the leadership structure and philosophy at O’Gorman Junior High. The leadership structure and philosophy

involves shared-decision making and collaboration to continue the “academic excellence” part of the school’s mission statement. A Building Leadership Team (BLT), consisting of five teachers, the principal, and a counselor, meet monthly to address any school climate or teacher concerns, and to plan the study and implementation of any programs. This team also identifies teachers in the school to share successful strategies at monthly faculty meetings. This has created an atmosphere of shared leadership and professional conversation.

Based on annual assessment data, the school’s teachers identify various strengths and weaknesses of both individuals and the school as a whole. From this data, the teachers and the principal identify one to three school improvement goals that are focused on throughout the year. These goals form the basis for not only the professional development days and allocation of resources, but also how faculty meetings are designed and conducted. Furthermore, they form the foundation for supervisory activities such as classroom walk-throughs, observations, and video-coaching sessions.

A Student Assistance Team meets on a regular basis to identify students who may not be performing in the classroom or who may need other emotional or academic support. This team is led by the principal and involves classroom teachers, along with the counselor and academic service coordinator. This team has been instrumental in providing effective strategies to students, parents, and other teachers.

This fall a culture survey was issued to returning teachers. This survey addressed a variety of school culture issues regarding the school including how they felt about school policies, planning time, communication, and overall staff climate. The survey provided specifics that will allow administration to build on the strengths and improve on the challenges that lie before the school. Additionally, a survey is issued in the spring of each year, garnering feedback on the leadership presence in the school.

Resources in the school are allocated to support student learning and engagement. Over the past five years through mostly fundraising efforts, O’Gorman Junior High School has been able to provide over 350 Chromebooks to students making one-to-one accessibility a reality in the school. Additionally, dollars have been spent recently to utilize an online video observation and coaching program in order to improve teacher effectiveness.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

O’Gorman Junior High School has long prided itself on high expectations and student achievement. However, the end result of such a process is a product of intentional and purposeful planning and actions carried out by faculty and students. The most instrumental practice employed in recent years is the focus on formative assessment throughout all of our content areas. Clear and understandable expectations, professional development, along with frequent feedback and sharing among staff, have turned intentional formative assessment into a strategy that has proven to be successful at O’Gorman Junior High School. With the school-wide use of frequent and effective formative assessment strategies, the school has been able to better identify and adjust lessons to match student mastery levels.

The process of formative assessment begins with a learning target. A learning target is posted in each classroom and relayed to the students on a daily basis. The targets are written in student-friendly language and are specific to the unit and directly connected to later assessment of learning. The students become aware of what they are learning and why they are learning it. The formative assessment(s) that follow match and assess where the students are at in regards to their mastery of the learning target.

The faculty trainings regarding formative assessments have been tied to both the traditional methods of checking for understanding to newer methods which involve technology. Think-pair-shares, writing responses, thumbs-up-thumbs-down approaches still serve as effective forms of checking for understanding. With the advent of student devices, teachers are able to gather real-time data and make adjustments to lessons immediately. Teachers now employ a variety of formative assessment tools such as Pear Deck, Kahoot, Plickers, and NearPod. Closure is an expected activity in each classroom as it provides teachers one last time to diagnose student learning prior to departing the classroom.

As a result of intentional formative assessment, O’Gorman Junior High School has seen summative test scores rise significantly during the past four years. Teachers have found that they can now go into greater depth in the material because of the student understanding that is present.

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 No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$5600
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$746

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 8%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 51%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: 2018

Test: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	429
Number of students tested	167
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: ACT Aspire
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 7
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	425
Number of students tested	167
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: