

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name St James School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 820 N Arlington Heights Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Arlington Heights State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60004-5666

County Cook

Telephone (224) 345-7145 Fax (224) 345-7220

Web site/URL http://www.stjameschoolah.org/ E-mail mkendrick@stjameschoolah.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* Dr. Jim Rigg E-mail jrigg@archchicago.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Chicago Tel. (312) 534-5212

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Dr. Jennifer Hartman
(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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 0 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	46	39	85
K	34	30	64
1	11	22	33
2	21	24	45
3	13	17	30
4	25	23	48
5	22	26	48
6	12	22	34
7	21	28	49
8	23	27	50
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	228	258	486

*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
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86 % White
 - 7 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 9%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	28
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	46
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	486
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 11

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

33 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>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>18</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: 1

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
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 23:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	95%	97%	97%	98%
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 2019.

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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2008

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

Saint James School is dedicated to partnering with parents in modeling Christ for our children. We strive to provide a foundation from which students recognize and develop their personal relationship with God, an academic culture of meaningful and lifelong learning, and beliefs, morals, and practices driven by Gospel values. We are called to walk in faith, live in hope, and act in love.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

St. James Catholic School has been providing an exceptional faith-based education to students for over 90 years. The tradition of academic excellence, character development, and faith formation has continued to grow as teachers, administrators, and staff model the mission of our school for our students. Our school's mantra is "Find A Way." This mantra helps our faculty and staff push beyond their comfort zones to "Find A Way" to help our students succeed to their highest potential academically, develop a strong moral compass, embrace a culture of inclusion, differentiate at a high level, and build a faith foundation that will stay with the students throughout their lives. Our goal is to help students become the best possible version of themselves comparable to no one else, no matter the individual circumstances of the child.

St. James School is centrally located in the Village of Arlington Heights and serves students in Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. The culture of the St. James community is one that revolves around love, support, and inclusion. St. James School focuses on doing what is best for each child that enters our doors. The staff at St. James School provides a positive and warm experience for our students. They begin each morning with the warm threshold greetings, supportive instruction, faith and character development, and doing all their duties with zeal.

St. James School students are constantly immersed in a culture of academic excellence. The students are positively encouraged to always put forth a first-class effort and are pushed to respond to higher-order questions and to critically think through the presented questions. The dynamic curriculum St. James School executes is one that pushes our students to develop into young men and women of intellect and to learn how to use that intellect for a higher purpose that aligns to root beliefs of the faith we instill in our students. As a school, we believe in three core instructional practices. The first being purposeful lessons with strong objectives that build skills that lead to standards being met. The second core instructional practice is checking for understanding. These checks for understanding are frequent, transparent uses of formative data to assess each student's level of mastery of the objective and inform instructional decisions. The third core instructional practice is providing our students with "At bats", which are multiple, scaffolded opportunities to achieve the lesson's purpose. We believe that these core instruction practices help keep our direct instruction so it is meaningful and improves our students understanding of the concepts being taught. In addition to these core instructional practices, our teachers take a data-driven approach to help continuously improve their daily instruction, which in turn leads to high levels of engagement and provides individualized support that can be delivered during small group instruction. Our staff is trained to collect and analyze data from standardized assessments, universal screeners, and formative classroom assessments in order to highlight priority standards that are in need of support. Once these areas of most support are identified, the teachers find research-based interventions to support those targeted benchmarks and standards previously identified. This growth mindset helps our staff effectively differentiate instruction and provide a high level of purpose filled instruction.

In addition to the classroom differentiation and core instructional practices that happen at St. James on a daily basis, we have embraced the mission of implementing inclusive practices that directly align with our Catholic mission. We believe that we are all created in the likeness and image of God. Given that root belief, we pursue full inclusion and find a way to provide a Catholic education to all no matter the circumstance. Our inclusion practice begins with our school's deep-rooted belief in a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS). Our MTSS program's purpose is to meet the needs of all learners of our school. This includes academic supports like child study, extra support before and after school, push in and pull out services provided in house, and supporting our students social and emotional growth. Our MTSS program is fueled by a passionate student services team which includes learning behavior specialists, counselors, and staff who provides the highest level of support. As a school, we provide in house services for students who have IEP plans or an accommodation/modification plan that include learning, physical, and mental disabilities. St. James School is on the cutting edge of what it means to be an inclusive Catholic school, and we continue to push our boundaries to find a way to be even more inclusive. We believe that anybody who wishes to receive a Catholic Education should. This school year, St. James welcomed two 6th grade students who have cerebral palsy. This inclusion was possible due to the recent modification to the school building which now includes a handicapped-equipped bathroom and an accessible entrance from the school to the parish office.

As well as providing outstanding academics, St. James School is committed to supporting student's character development and social-emotional growth through a positive lens. St. James School implements a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program that focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors in addition to supporting students through learning moments. As a school we believe in immediate and genuine praise when good behavior is shown, this includes our positive behavior reward ticket system. As a school, we average each student receiving 6 positive reward tickets per week, which over a whole school year yields over 100,000 positive reward tickets given to students. On the flip side, our philosophy on discipline is that consequences should not be public or humiliating, punishments should fit the undesired behavior observed, and they should be a learning lesson that will build skills so that the students will be able to self-regulate and avoid the near occasion of these behaviors. Our PBIS program is not only a discipline system but is a branch of our MTSS and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. As a Catholic school, we believe in teaching students to not only be the best learners they can be, but also the best people they can be. Our PBIS program reinforces ideas like treating others as you want to be treated, mercy, compassion, patience, and humility. These behavior moments, quickly become learning moments that develop a student's social intelligence and help build an intrinsic desire to be good. Ultimately, we strive to develop all of our students into young men and women who use their intellect for a greater good.

In 2008 St. James school received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award. This prestigious designation resonated with not only our school families but in the greater Arlington Heights area. Since receiving this award, we have seen so many positive effects including a school pride that revolves around a culture of high academic success. We leveraged this award to continue to maintain high enrollments, to help build a strong school culture, and to recognize the fantastic work our hard-working teachers do on a daily basis. We are very proud of our past, and we are incredibly excited about our future. We are full of hope and proud to be reapplying for this esteemed award.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The curriculum at St. James School is more than just a series of books, it is the superb instruction that is carried out by our faculty. Their role in the classroom is to determine the individual needs of the students in their classrooms and find targeted lessons and interventions to support their learning. This level of differentiation happens in a few ways. Some of our faculty leverage classroom technology including our one-to-one iPad initiative to help provide individualized instruction. Some teachers leverage programs like the daily 5 to differentiate for small groups. As a whole, our teachers take a data-driven approach to help continuously improve their daily instruction. Our staff collects and analyzes data from standardized assessments, universal screeners, and formative classroom assessments in order to highlight priority standards that are in need of support.

As a school, we believe in three core instructional practices. The first is purposeful lessons with strong objectives that build skills that lead to standards being met. The second core instructional practice is checking for understanding. These checks for understanding are frequent, transparent uses of formative data to assess each student’s level of mastery of the objective and inform instructional decisions. The third core instructional practice is providing our students “At bats”, which are multiple, scaffolded opportunities to achieve the lesson’s purpose. We believe that these core instruction practices help keep our instruction grounded in purpose, data, and meaningful practice. When classroom instruction is highly effective, then students understand the concepts being taught, which ultimately leads to the students achieving their maximum potential. Our end goal for all of our students is for them to be the best they can be. Excellent instruction and a strong curriculum lead our students to grow into the best individuals they can be.

1b. Reading/English language arts

The ability to communicate through reading, writing, and speaking are integrated in all areas of the St. James School curriculum. Through this school-wide integration, our reading and ELA curriculums combine to help students reach their highest potential. The St. James ELA curriculum is a PreK-8th grade model that incorporates backwards and universal design for learning that ties directly into the common core state standards. Phonemic awareness, phonics, grammar, comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, critical thinking skills, logical reasoning, analysis, and written responses are the skills we instill in our students in order to articulate and communicate main ideas and detailed responses. Our students leave our school ready to formulate arguments, debate topics, and reinforce main ideas.

The St. James reading curriculum begins in our Pre-Kindergarten where students make connections between letters and phonemic awareness. Our PreK teachers provide direct and small group instruction for students and they promote reading with literacy centers that are built into their rooms. The literacy centers and small group instruction provide for differentiated instruction, early intervention, and early identification of potential learning impairments. As students move into kindergarten, we begin assessing their readiness through our AIMSweb assessment program. This nationally normed assessment allows us to gather informative data on our students and helps our teachers create reading groups that meet the needs of the students and gives students the opportunity to read at their individual level. Teachers continue to do whole group instruction through our phonemic awareness program and small group support during independent work time. In addition to the in-class support, St. James School also leverages a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) who provides support to qualifying students who have been flagged in our Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs. Students can receive consistent SLP supports throughout their time at St. James. As students progress through the upper levels of St. James, they progressively become more exposed to more challenging texts that push them to work through higher-order thinking questions.

1c. Mathematics

From basic math facts to solving real-world critical thinking problems, St. James implements a strong math curriculum that pushes the students to articulate mathematical reasoning in addition to solving problems. This vertically aligned curriculum starts the student's math journey as early as the Pre-Kindergarten with number recognition and counting and finishes in 8th grade with our highest-level students receiving Algebra II concepts. The math committee selects research-based programs and supplemental materials that align with the common core standards and the learning profiles of our students. Our selected math curricula are designed to meet children at their level and challenge them to gain knowledge and understanding. Each school year we have a large number of students who place into the highest tracks of high school math at both private and public high schools. Beginning in 4th grade students begin being placed in flexible ability groups that differentiates the content, so students are being challenged and supported at their current ability level. These groups are flexible, and students are able to move both up and down depending on the ongoing progress monitoring our students receive in the classrooms. Our teachers all commit to teaching their math lessons using the gradual release model. This provides the students to be exposed to the content, then given many guided practice opportunities, and then time for independent work. Having the opportunity for frequent guided practice opportunities is critical in order to build correct problem-solving habits before reinforcing with independent practice. These guided practice sessions utilize checks for understanding where the teacher can differentiate and reteach on individual levels so students can receive individualized supports that align with specific needs. Students are constantly challenged to apply and defend their knowledge and mathematical solutions with aspects of the question that requires students to prove how they know or show the steps of how they reached their answer. Students who qualify also attend St. Viator High School for high school level math courses. The teachers at St. James are committed to excellent math instruction with many scaffolded opportunities for growth, which lead to high achievement on standardized assessments and at the high school level.

1d. Science

We believe that inquiry-based learning in science is the best way for students to attain a concept and have a deep understanding of the why behind the concept. This is achieved through hands-on learning experiments and activities that force students to problem solve and reflect on the process. This heavy emphasis on tactile investigations and labs provides the students have an opportunity to experience science firsthand. This inquiry and lab-based model allows students to discover the information for themselves. All of our science curriculum is driven through the scientific method of stating the problem, researching and gathering information, formulating and testing a hypothesis, analyzing the data, and drawing a conclusion. The scientific method helps organize the student's thoughts and gives them the opportunity to investigate life, chemical, physical, and earth sciences. Our curriculum utilizes both hands-on and digital resources to help bring the best experience to life and differentiate activities to the students individual needs. Our vertically aligned science curriculum begins with the needs of the 8th grade graduate in mind and intentionally works backwards in order for all concepts to be properly scaffolded at each age group. As the students grow in the subject of science, they have a solid understanding of the experimental methodology that gives these future scientists and engineers a strong background as they move into high school.

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

Through the study of community, geography, history, cultures past and present, economics, government, and global citizenship students learn they are part of an interconnected global society, their role as citizens and the impact of change upon society. Students have the opportunity to experience government firsthand through student council. This council is a student-led and elected board that organizes events for charity, provides leadership amongst the students, and are models for the other students. Our students also participate in programs where the students connect digitally to interact with their peers from other countries. This helps our students see the world beyond their local neighborhood which they spend most of their time in. Field trips also allow our students to experience the diversity of the many neighborhoods in Chicago, local and state governments, and to travel to Washington DC to experience the federal government. These immersion trips provide hands-on learning that allows students to make real-world connections to the rich content that is provided in their coursework. In addition to our scaffolded social studies curriculum, the use

of first source texts are emphasized in order to develop a clear knowledge of what happened and to form objective opinions based on their personal beliefs, the teachings of our Catholic faith, and the lessons our past teaches us about how to tackle the challenges of the future.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

The St. James Preschool begins with a play-based learning curriculum. We believe that through movement and play, our youngest students can learn the foundational building blocks for them to be successful in their schooling years. This play-based learning curriculum adopts many Montessori concepts where students are exposed to intentionally designed centers to promote learning. These centers include math, science, reading, social studies, and art. The materials at these centers are rotated throughout the year in order for students to be exposed to a wide range of hands-on learning materials that connect them to the Kindergarten curriculum. Our teachers also have direct instruction time during the day, beginning with a morning meeting, then leading into our standards-based reading, writing, phonemic awareness, and math curriculums. These curriculums are aligned vertically to the curriculums used in the upper-grade levels in order to set them up for success when they enter Kindergarten. The impact we have noticed from our play-based learning preschool program is that our students are socially and academically ready for elementary school. The students also come in with a love of school developed through play and exposure to the school through programs like prayer buddies where preschool students interact with older students in the building. The students leave the preschool program wanting to come back for more because they have felt the kindness and compassion of our teachers, aids, and community.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At St. James School students are exposed to more than just the core curriculum of classes. We believe that we have a duty to form well-rounded students who are exposed to other content and coursework that helps promote creativity, creates digital citizenship, enhances the gifts and talents of the students, and faith formation.

The fine arts department is comprised of art and music. Art class is provided to all students through a dedicated art teacher in 3rd through 8th grade. Grade levels 2 and below have art integrated into their classrooms. The curriculum develops critical thinking skills by providing students with as many experiences in art as possible utilizing a variety of media. Art class allows students to express themselves through their work and to engage the creative side of the brain. Through all these experiences, students are exposed to art history and the social or religious concepts that inspired the artist. In music class, our students acquire knowledge of rhythm, performance, instruments, composers, history, and music theory. We have a dedicated music teacher who sees all students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. In addition to the music curriculum, our students also experience music at mass through praise and worship songs. This allows our students to connect music and active practice in our faith-based setting. Band is offered to grades 4 through 8 emphasizing instrument instruction as well as performance. Many of our band students continue their musical careers into high school and beyond. We have had many students qualify and participate in Illinois Music Educators Association selective student bands to perform for large audiences.

The physical education curriculum at St. James School develops students' bodies as well as their minds. Through various units, St. James strives to develop students' positive self-worth, good sportsmanship, responsibility, and an appreciation for lifelong health skills. The focus in the primary grades is to build gross motor skills. Each school year the students get older, the focus shifts to fine motor skills. These motor skills are developed through a variety of units including team sports, fitness assessments, dance, team building, and other games. Students also receive health, including graduating St. James School with CPR certification. Students learn in health how to sustain a healthy lifestyle and how to take care of themselves as best as possible. Our students leave our school knowing how to create healthy habits and understanding they are stronger as a team.

Spanish is the foreign language offered at St. James School. Students begin their Spanish instruction in sixth

grade with the intent for students to master this second language. Our students graduate St. James and many of our students jump into Spanish II given the solid base that has been built in their Spanish coursework. In addition to the goal of proficient Spanish language skills, students also participate in many Spanish cultural areas including Día de los Muertos, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Cinco de Mayo, and many more. The Spanish curriculum sets our students up for success in high school and is a lifelong skill.

Technology is integrated in the classrooms through our one-to-one iPad program, but St. James goes beyond and incorporates technology as a class for all students in 3rd grade through 8th grade. This curriculum is designed to teach the students the necessary skills to embrace the 21st-century learning skills that they will need to be successful in school and in their future careers. Students learn at a young age how to effectively type on a keyboard, and grow into learning about digital citizenship. St. James School is a Common Sense Media certified school. St. James places a heavy focus on our students being digital citizens, knowing how to find credible sources, and how to respect intellectual property in the digital front. Each school year St. James School participates in the Hour of Code program, which develops base level coding skills, and more importantly encourages students to consider careers in tech industries. Our students move on to high school ready to excel given their deep knowledge of technology and 21st-century learning skills.

A critical component of St. James School's curriculum is our Religion classes. We are at the core a Parish affiliated Catholic school. We believe in forming our students based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic church. Each day all of our students receive a dedicated religion period where they study the bible, have rich discussions about their faith, and in specific grades receive the sacramental prep. Our students begin in the primary grades learning from Old Testament parables and move into the New Testament as they progress in their understanding of the faith. Our students leave St. James with a deep understanding of their Catholic faith and that faith base helps guide them through the challenges of being a person in this world.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

St. James School has a very strong student services teams and special education department that works within the MTSS support model. As a school we have three Learning Behavior Specialists (LBS) on staff, a full-time school counselor, a school nurse, a district provided Speech and Language Pathologist, and a faculty and staff that is committed to inclusive classrooms. As a school, our mentality is to "Find A Way". That means we work together to take our challenges head on and figure out a way to educate all the students in our care regardless of their circumstance.

Our MTSS rooted student services process begins with our in-house child study program. This is a committee that meets with every grade level team to analyze students assessment data to find students who could use more academic supports. Teachers approach the committee with tier one differentiation they have used for the students and present progress monitoring data. Students who are identified as needs more support and are not responding to tier one interventions, then begin to receive in house tier two interventions. For instance, if a student in grades 1 through 3 is struggling with reading and are below the identified local benchmark, they can begin receiving pull out supports using our Level Literacy program. These supports are designed to be early interventions in order to address challenges so the students can return to full time instruction in the classrooms. Another program we have in place for our older students who need additional support is our Zero Hour program. This program happens before school begins. At Zero Hour students can get help with homework and concept attainment with the help of teachers and our learning behavior specialists. This program is designed to give students the support needed so they can continue to be in their classrooms. Both the Leveled Literacy and Zero Hour programs provide early interventions so our students can continue to remain in their differentiated classrooms.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students who excel are given the opportunity for enrichment work and are given the chance to join leveled classrooms that meet their needs. Teachers are trained to not only provide interventions and in class supports for our students who struggle, but they are also trained on how to differentiate for those who excel. One way

we do this is by utilizing small group instruction where prompts, problems, and questions can be leveled to students' ability levels. This allows the whole class to work on the same activity while addressing independent needs. This inclusive model also works for independent practice as well. Students have assignments modified to be in compliance with student accommodation and Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and to push the students who need higher order thinking problems. In addition to our inclusive classrooms, beginning in fourth grade we begin to utilize leveled classrooms for math and reading. This helps to provide the proper pacing and rigor to meet the needs of the majority of the group. Students in higher tracks of these leveled classes have the opportunity to take high school coursework in eighth grade. Currently, we send a group of students to St. Viator High School to receive accelerated math classes and Mandarin Chinese coursework.

3c. Special education

In our MTSS approach to our classrooms and student supports, there is a population of students we serve who need tier two and three interventions and supports. This population of students are on either an IEP or an accommodation/modification plan. These students generally receive a variety of pull out and push in support from our Learning Behavior Specialist depending on the individual student needs. Our student services team works with our local school district to have students evaluated when the data we have collected is under national norms, has shown a pattern of needing support, and minimal response to intervention. The local school district evaluates students at St. James and creates an IEP for the variety of disabilities that have been identified. After district testing, our students can receive speech and language services from the local school district, through the on-campus Speech and Language Pathologist. Our other students with an IEP are then given support in house from our team of Learning Behavior Specialists. These cases are documented, and progress monitored as pull out and push in support are being provided. If students do not qualify for district support given their test scores are higher than national benchmarks, but are below local norms, then our school counselor, with consent from the student's parent/guardian, puts together an accommodation/modification plan so that we can service those students in hours. Some of the disabilities we service are autism, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, anxiety disorders, and executive functioning disorders. Our special education team works hard to service these students and to work with classroom teachers to provide our students the best Catholic school education possible.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

When students enroll at the school, we identify English Language Learners (ELL) through our home language survey. Once families and students are identified as ELL, then they are given an evaluation to identify their English proficiency levels. Students who are below the national benchmarks qualify to receive ELL services to help strengthen their English language and communication skills. These supports are pull out services that help build student's vocabulary, grammar skills, writing, and reading support. Students that qualify for ELL supports are progress monitored and evaluated for growth metrics with the goal of reaching proficient language skills.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Immersing our students in a culture that supports their growth and helps form them to be the best young men and women they can be is a critical component of our school. One of the ways we create this positive Christ centered culture of joy is by hosting weekly morning assemblies with the upper and lower grades of the school and by monthly all school pep rallies. These assemblies and pep rallies help build a growth mindset culture and instill virtues in our students while having a positive and fun experience. Morning assemblies are done weekly and split up into groups of Kindergarten through 4th grade and 5th through 8th grade. These two groups meet once a week for ten to fifteen minutes to focus on a virtue of the week, to reinforce our positive behavior system, motivate students to work their hardest, to acknowledge student success, and to start the day off on a positive motivational note. During pep rallies, we try to establish a sense of school pride. These pep rallies happen once a month and involve the whole school. The pep rallies also include middle school pep band playing the school fight song, acknowledging students who have earned the most positive behavior tickets that month, playing games with the students, and praying as a community. These pep rallies focus on being positive, fun, and take a moment to help reinforce school wide root beliefs. When students have pride and love for the place that they learn, they will develop an intrinsic desire to want to work their hardest and achieve at their highest potential. Another way we engage our students as a faith community is by attending all school mass. At mass, we take time to pray together, reflect on the gospels and teachings of the church, sing praise and worship songs, and connect our Catholic mission with the character and faith development we believe in. St. James School is focused around a Christ Centered Culture of Joy and academic excellence. Being intentional about building those programs is critical to student success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The parent base and parish community at St. James are tightly connected with the school. As a school, we believe that parents are the first line of education for their children and that together the school and families can help develop the children into young men and women ready to take on the challenges ahead of them. The families at St. James School believe in the mission of Catholic education and that buy in is critical to our success. We engage our families through community building activities, advisory roles, and fundraising to support our efforts. One of the main parent-led groups at the school is the St. James School Council, which is an advisory board that exists to advise the Pastor and Principal in matters of marketing, finance, recruitment, family engagement, and other areas of expertise they can provide. This group meets once a month and helps to make St. James School as strong as it possibly can. Currently, the School Council is working with the Pastor and Principal to increase our already high retention rates, help establish a strong presence in the greater Arlington Heights community, and to ensure the school is addressing the concerns in the parent community in order to stay ahead of any potential issue. Another parent-led group that does excellent work for the school is the Family & School Association (FSA). The FSA has two main purposes, the first being a community engagement group and to help support the school financially so we can provide the necessary resources we need in order to achieve the vision of the school. The FSA has put on community events such as comedy night, daddy daughter dance, mother son dances, and many other events that engage both the school and parish communities. On the financial end, the FSA has a targeted goal of raising \$75,000 dollars each school year and almost every year the FSA well exceeds their goal. They achieve this financial goal by running an annual fund that is a direct ask to families and people in the community. They also host fundraising events such as Lady's Night Out, Special Lunch program, and other community fundraisers that go directly to in house financial aid programs, extra support for our special education program, and enhancements to our school building. These parent-led groups help support the school and engage the community so we can continue to work together to achieve our common goal of helping develop students into the finest people they can be.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Cultivating a professional culture that supports the faculty and staff in the school building is critical to the success of the school. We do this by engaging our teachers in professional development, building Professional Learning Communities (PLC) where teachers can intentionally collaborate, and to empower our staff to help build a school culture of excellence through various teacher led committees. Intentional and meaningful professional development provides our staff with the chance to continue to grow and improve their craft. We have a professional development calendar that helps provide frequent and timely professional development. The second week of each month the entire staff meets together for an hour of school wide professional development. School leadership uses this time to address and support common areas in need of support as seen in teacher observations. During this time as a whole staff helps connect grade levels that do not normally collaborate together and allows them to share knowledge or ideas. The third week of each month grade level teams meet in smaller professional learning communities to help address items they are seeing as a collective group. These PLC groups work to enhance the instruction in the classrooms and help provide behavioral supports for students in their classes. These small group communities build a level of trust amongst each other that focuses on how to do what is best for the students we serve. Our teachers are also supported through administration and the willingness for administrators to roll up their sleeves and provide support to the staff. This support can come in the form of frequent and meaningful feedback, helping problem solve a tough situation, or even emotional support. Teaching is more than a job, it is a vocation. Being able to provide professional, passionate, and purposeful support to the staff helps fill their tanks to continue to provide the best instruction and experience as possible for the students.

4. School Leadership:

St. James School leadership starts at the top with the Pastor and Principal. This team works together to establish a greater vision of the school, to ensure the Catholic mission of the school is upheld, and that we continue to push our school to not settle for average. The joint vision of the Pastor and Principal is then communicated to the faculty by building a strong culture of growth mindset, by supporting and empowering the teachers and staff who execute the plan, and by providing or finding any resource necessary in order to fulfill what we set out to do. We have grown a strong culture that does not give up and follows the mantra of “Find A Way”. This mantra means that we are going to take on our challenges head on, not avoid them. It has been a mindset shift that has empowered our staff to unify in the common goal of doing anything necessary to make sure the students become the best they can be academically, morally, and in their faith. Leadership has also provided meaningful professional development in the areas of writing strong objectives, finding interventions that are research based to help the area of most need, strategies to provide frequent assessments, and many more. The more we sharpen the skills of our teachers, the better the education will be for the students. In addition to the Pastor and Principal, there is a leadership team that works together to execute all aspects of the necessary leadership. This leadership team is made up of an Assistant Principal, School Counselor, Director of Special Education, Director of Faith Formation, and subject specific department heads. These members work together to distribute the responsibilities of the school and help execute them. The way leadership affects student learning is through the teachers. This is done by providing meaningful and targeted professional development, frequent and purposeful feedback, and by coaching teachers to improve their craft. Coaching teachers goes beyond just giving plain feedback, it allows the teacher to practice what they are going to put into action and gives them action steps to take in order to help improve what they do. When teachers are executing at their highest level, then students are receiving exceptional instruction, which in turn leads to achievement. St. James School leadership works to defend the mission, provide support, and do what it takes to make the school the absolute best it can be.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

St. James School is focused on continuous growth and finding ways to improve instruction in the classroom. One focus that has helped guide our practice has been writing meaningful objectives that drive the daily instruction. We operate under the state standards and Archdiocese of Chicago standards. Each one of those standards can be unpacked into multiple skills that the students should attain in order to fulfill the overarching standard. Once skills are identified, then we can build individual objectives that build those skills, that lead to standards being met. This backwards design for learning helps build individual steps to achieve the end goal. Our teachers have received multiple PD sessions on building meaningful objectives that help drive what happens in the classroom. Having a direction is critical to making sure all student needs are met. Our objective statements always begin with either “The students will be able to...”, “I can..”, or “The students can...” These phrases begin with a positive growth mindset that focuses our teachers on building a specific skill. This then allows our faculty to work backwards to then find activities or lessons that will empower students to build those necessary skills. In addition to the objective statements being posted in lesson plans, our teachers post the objectives prominently in their classrooms. This helps the students prepare for the lesson, have a growth mindset about what they are going to learn and keep the focus of the classroom on growth and skill building. These objective statements also help drive differentiation. When teachers know the skills they are building, they can then begin to scaffold the lesson properly so that all learning needs can be met. It can be overwhelming to differentiate for an entire standard. Differentiation becomes attainable when daily lessons have a clear objective that build toward the whole. Our teachers build objectives and lessons that include universal design that help students improve no matter the need. After lessons, our teachers collect data on the success of the lesson and make data driven decisions to decide if a skill needs more refining or if they can move to another skill and build toward new standards. Our faculty is committed to helping our students achieve their goals. We do this by defining the goals of daily lessons and creating objective statements that lead to a skill being built, that align with our standards. We have seen tremendous growth in classroom instruction, just by focusing our instruction around creating small goals that lead to a larger goal being met.

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? \$0
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$0
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 3%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%