

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

Official School Name Saint Paul Of The Cross School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 140 S Northwest Highway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Park Ridge State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60068-4285

County Cook

Telephone (847) 939-3900 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.spc-school.net E-mail emickelburgh@spc-school.net

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) 534-5200

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Siobhan Haugh
(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):
- 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. 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	44	65	109
K	32	28	60
1	21	24	45
2	23	12	35
3	19	24	43
4	18	17	35
5	33	24	57
6	14	19	33
7	29	23	52
8	23	24	47
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	256	260	516

*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
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 83 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	538
(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):
Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Mongolian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukranian

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: 10

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

56 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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>21</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>3</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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
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 18:1

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	95%	94%	95%	96%	95%
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. 2011

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

St. Paul of the Cross School engages students in a comprehensive approach to the academic, social, physical, and spiritual growth through a variety of programs.

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

“SPC is the place to be,” is a motto you’ll hear children gleefully shout, parents happily recite and faculty consistently declare on the campus of St. Paul of the Cross School — a vibrant community where joyful learning, and spiritual and personal growth have transpired for 95 years.

Located in Park Ridge, Illinois — an urban suburb directly adjacent to the City of Chicago — St. Paul of the Cross School (SPC) attracts families from 17 zip codes and diverse socio-economic backgrounds, who desire academic excellence and faith-filled education for their children.

St. Paul of the Cross strives to provide an inclusive, collaborative and differentiated curriculum that instills a strong faith foundation for its 516 students in preschool through eighth grade. The school is committed to educating the whole child and helping each student develop his or her unique gifts and talents.

Student outcomes highlight how the school fulfills this mission successfully, year after year. Within the past five years, 100 percent of eighth graders were accepted to their first-choice high schools — including the most prestigious area Catholic high schools and Chicago selective enrollment public schools.

Graduates consistently place into honors classes wherever they enroll, and they often earn merit-based academic scholarships from area Catholic high schools. Feedback from local high schools indicates alumni are well prepared for a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, and they are often chosen for student leadership positions.

These students’ successes would not be possible without the dedication of SPC’s highly educated and trained faculty members. In fact, more than 80 percent of SPC faculty members have master’s degrees. Further, they have completed comprehensive professional development training on research-based differentiation strategies — a mainstay of the school’s curriculum.

While the faculty’s individual achievements are impressive, their constant collaboration is what truly sets students up for success. For instance, the faculty’s formal mentoring program pairs new teachers with veteran teachers — some with more than 30 years of experience on staff — for much desired support.

Additionally, core teachers and practical fine arts teachers collaborate to support interdisciplinary learning at each grade level in the areas of Spanish, physical education, art, music and STEM.

Finally, grade-level unit teams work together to (1) implement a rigorous and inclusive vertically aligned curriculum; (2) utilize data to inform curricular change and differentiated instruction; and (3) identify at-risk learners to provide tiered interventions and ensure academic success.

Such collaboration, along with support from the parent and parish community, has allowed St. Paul of the Cross School to continually innovate — further enhancing the curriculum, instruction, and overall school programs since being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2011. The school community continually builds upon proven success, and the 2011 designation served as momentum for achieving even greater results.

For example, parent support and fundraising enabled the addition of a STEM lab and a partnership with Northwestern University’s Future Union of Science Engineers (FUSE) program. This fueled the rigorous STEM curriculum now in place for grades K-8. A capital campaign is currently underway to build a second state-of-the-art STEM lab for grades K-4 during the summer of 2020.

The school also changed its master schedule from a traditional 8-period day to a 6-period modified block schedule for grades 4-8. This schedule allows for longer class periods so teachers can deploy more research-based instructional strategies that engage students in active and project-based learning. It also allows for more time devoted to STEM, music and art in all grades, opportunities for electives in seventh and eighth grades, and greater opportunity for in-depth examination of course content.

Innovative learning goes well beyond the classroom. SPC takes a comprehensive approach to advancing students' social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth by providing a variety of co-curricular service, learning, and athletic programs. In addition, the school partners with United Stand Counseling Services to aid in the social-emotional support of students and families.

As a result of SPC's holistic approach to education, graduates are faith-filled leaders equipped with 21st century skills. They are prepared to succeed in an evolving global society as committed Christians and loyal citizens. As such, St. Paul of the Cross School seeks Blue Ribbon recognition once again because it is committed to continuous improvement characterized by excellence, rigor, and inclusion.

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

St. Paul of the Cross School teachers achieve their primary goal of student learning by developing and facilitating an inclusive, collaborative, and differentiated curriculum with support from SPC administrators, inclusion specialists, grade-level unit teams, and subject-area experts on staff.

The school follows the backwards planning approach where teachers unpack and divide the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) — and the units they expect to cover — into three trimesters. They create integrated unit plans that identify unit objectives with the understanding the plans are live, working documents. Plans include essential questions for units or standards; pre-, formative, and summative assessments; multiple means of representation, engagement and expression; and coordinating subjects to transfer skills in different settings.

When planning instruction, teachers draw upon a repertoire of instructional approaches and methods; they use combinations of these in each lesson and unit. Instructional approaches may be categorized as experiential learning, independent study, and direct, indirect or interactive instruction. Lessons and assignments focus on understanding the interconnectedness of ideas across academic disciplines rather than fact memorization.

Further, teachers actively integrate technology and blended learning into their instructional approaches. Google Classroom, Google Drive, and online projects and collaboration tools like Flipgrid, Padlet, and Kahoot are used daily. Teachers also deploy videos, podcasts, and online quizzes to move students toward higher levels of thinking and understanding.

Fifth through eighth grade students are one-to-one on Chromebooks. Preschool through fourth grade students access Chromebooks and iPads on carts. The school’s technology-infused curriculum fosters greater student accountability and promotes parent-teacher communication.

Committed to continuous improvement, SPC ensures academic excellence and the appropriation of resources. A curriculum review cycle addresses the integration of new resources into the core curriculum. The school developed and implemented a rotation schedule this year to allow for continued examination of curricular resources so that students have access to relevant and rigorous materials.

1b. Reading/English language arts

St. Paul of the Cross School teachers encourage students to read and write from the moment they begin school — fostering a love for language across the curricula. In fact, literacy and writing are connected to all content areas at SPC.

Reading material and writing assignments are consistently tied to themes also investigated in science, social studies and math. For instance, third grade integrates the novel, “I Survived the Great Chicago Fire,” into a social studies/language arts cross-curricular Chicago unit, while fifth grade integrates a writing assignment into a major science project it undertakes each year.

These cross-curricular initiatives shine a light on the importance of reading and writing for students — only enhancing the already robust ELA curricula, which integrates the best components of guided-reading, grammar, writing, and novel studies. Foundational skills are the focus in the early grades, while analytical skills take priority in the upper grades.

The ELA curriculum in grades K-3 consists of guided reading using the Fountas and Pinnell leveled system and library. Starting with a thematic approach, along with Foundations, Pearson Phonics, and Words Their NBRs 2020

Way, students have a rigorous and varied curriculum. Flexible guided reading groups, differentiated literacy centers, and writing conferences are also hallmarks of this program.

In grades 4-8, students transition to a more demanding curriculum that includes novel studies and literature circles with age-appropriate, high-interest content. Students read a variety of novels to meet their Lexile level, and to foster a love for independent reading. Another objective of novel studies is to showcase the literary elements of each book.

In all grades, small-group instruction helps students become proficient readers and writers — accelerating their progress in fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and grammar. Full-time teachers' aides in preschool and Kindergarten, and a part-time teacher's aide in first grade, help support this small-group instructional model and mastery of literacy. SPC is also equipped with two inclusion specialists, who support lower and higher performing students in grades PK-8 to further enable literacy success.

Beyond instruction, continuous and differentiated assessments are critical to the school's successful ELA curricula. Students in grades K-8 take Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments and MAP testing three times per year. In addition, grade-level writing assessments and oral presentations help teachers monitor progress.

For example, eighth graders participate in a Socratic Circle to analyze and support their ideas about the book, "The Outsiders." Students have a civil discussion and learn how to counter or enhance other students' opinions. Sixth graders write letters to a character from the novel "Esperanza Rising" to practice perspective-taking along with letter writing.

Based on consistent assessment data, the team then determines the instruction needed for each student and plans strategic interventions for both struggling and advanced students — calling upon the above-mentioned inclusion specialists when needed.

St. Paul of the Cross School's ELA program is differentiated and responsive to students' individual needs and abilities across all grade levels. Ultimately, the common goal among ELA teachers and inclusion specialists is to use knowledge of student abilities to help each individual grow.

1c. Mathematics

SPC provides a math curriculum based on common core standards, which prepares students for a college preparatory high school math program. Its scope and sequence are vertically aligned to the Common Core Math Standards. The curriculum is taught using Everyday Math in Preschool, and Math and Focus in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Overall, the math program focuses on problem solving by building the student's understanding of concepts through visual or pictorial representation, and eventually, symbolic representation. Instructional methods include concrete-pictorial-abstract learning progression, differentiated instruction, manipulatives, interactive notebooks, interventions, and enrichment.

Students in preschool through third grade are taught in self-contained, differentiated classrooms, where teachers set up centers for the students to review, practice, and discuss math unit concepts. Fourth grade students are taught in differentiated math classes based on grade-level standards and outcomes.

Based on mathematical acumen and performance, fifth through eighth grade students are taught on different tracks. Students on regular and advanced math tracks engage in grade-level scope and sequence rooted in Common Core Math Standards; 20 percent of content is above grade level. However, on the advanced track, instruction is above grade level.

Curriculum for fifth through eighth graders in advanced math is one grade-level ahead of their actual grade — meaning fifth graders study sixth grade curriculum; sixth graders study seventh grade curriculum; seventh graders study eighth grade curriculum and Algebra I; and eighth graders study Algebra II.

Placement in the advanced class is based on a qualifying summative math exam, the MAP Spring RIT score, and the COGAT Quantitative and Composite Scores.

All grade levels and math tracks rely on unit assessments, common formative and summative assessments, and common grade-based instructional practices and tests. In addition, SPC administers the MAP test and ACT ASPIRE test three times a year.

Data from these assessments is used to drive instruction, enhance curriculum, and direct resources to those who most need it. Resource math is also available on a small group or individual basis with emphasis on grade-level concepts. Resource teachers use either a push-in or pull-out model to help those students who might be struggling.

In addition, SPC is fortunate to staff a math consultant who assists teachers by updating the program's scope and sequence, recommending instructional strategies, analyzing math data for student placement, and answering questions about the curriculum.

Beyond the classroom, students participate in math competitions and Math Olympiads for Elementary and Middle Schools. SPC's focus on the whole child ensures we provide opportunities for students to excel in areas of interest and aptitude, both in and out of the classroom. In general, the math program has seen great success in recent years. Parent support for STEM initiatives has in part allowed us to evolve the curriculum with great vigor, so that all students can succeed.

1d. Science

Support for STEM initiatives has also allowed for exciting developments in the school's hands-on, project-based science curriculum.

Textbooks reflect the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and aim to increase information processing, provide quick feedback on students' interpretation of real-world data and graphs, and teach students how to draw conclusions or further develop hypotheses. The yearlong coursework combines informational reading, lab work, projects, quizzes, and tests relating to life, physical and earth science, and engineering design.

Beyond traditional coursework, SPC partners with Northwestern University and its Future Union of Science Engineers (FUSE) program for an innovative approach to science curriculum. The program is structured to help students work through STEM challenges using 21st century learning skills and the engineering design process.

Two designated STEM teachers have developed a comprehensive STEM education curriculum focused on the design and engineering process. Beginning in kindergarten, all students take a supplemental STEM class. The school has already built one state-of-the-art STEM lab, and recently launched a capital campaign to build another such lab for grades K-4 in the summer of 2020.

Field trips, hands-on projects, and science-based extracurricular clubs supplement SPC's science program. The science fair is a mainstay of the junior high curriculum. SPC students have consistently excelled at regional, and state-level science fairs sponsored by the Illinois Junior Academy of Science. They've earned "gold-level" and "best in category" awards at the state level, and SPC has been named the top school in the region five times in the past 15 years.

Future City Competition, a rigorous engineering competition, is a long-running extracurricular activity at SPC. Students design a computer model of a future city, write an essay on a given topic, build a scale model of part of the city, and prepare an oral presentation about the city. SPC teams have won first place at the regional level six times, and they have also ranked nationally.

From kindergarten to eighth grade, SPC's hands-on approach to science is evident throughout the school.

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

Social Studies at SPC teaches for the 21st Century. The school's Social Studies Alive curriculum, which features interactive textbooks, enables teachers to deploy hands-on, engaging and interactive instruction to teach students more than ever before.

The curriculum is aligned with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy to ensure students develop literacy skills through social studies. It is organized around four college and career readiness strands: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.

Appreciation for cultural and economic diversity accompanies critical analysis of events. Integration of primary sources makes history come alive. Project-based learning assists students in making connections between historical events and society today. Students participate in school government and develop an appreciation for rights and responsibilities.

Throughout various Social Studies units, SPC teachers emphasize the importance of making connections within their community and the value of civic-minded behavior. For example, SPC kindergarten students host an annual Thanksgiving feast for kindergarteners from a school in an ethnically diverse and economically challenged area of Chicago.

Additionally, students engage in acts of social justice with the Summer Urban Immersion and Adopt-a-Family programs. Each year, students and staff also raise money for a Lenten service project, like providing aide to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

All these projects, a host of others, and numerous civic-minded field trips supplement the social studies curriculum, students develop 21st century skills, including critical thinking, cross-cultural collaboration and positive attitudes toward diversity.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

St. Paul of the Cross School's three-year-old preschool and four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs adhere to the Illinois Early Learning Standards and are based on a young child's development. Teachers observe, respect, affirm, and nurture each student's understanding and abilities, and they encourage them to explore, grow, master skills, ask questions, and share what they learn.

SPC classrooms provide a safe, creative, and responsive environment that follows research-based, developmentally appropriate practices. They are structured to support individual curiosity through play-based and project-based learning, organized into monthly themes. All subject areas are covered in these monthly themes and allow students to connect learning across domains and build upon prior knowledge and vocabulary.

Learning centers are the primary instruments that engage students with the curriculum. These hands-on centers allow teachers to work one-on-one and in small groups on key learning objectives, and they allow students to choose activities that promote development in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, gross motor skills, the arts, and social and emotional health.

Students are also offered practical fine arts beginning in the preschool program. All preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners participate in Spanish, Music, and Physical Education once a week. SPC partners with The Language Academy of Park Ridge to provide the Spanish curriculum with a strong focus on music and movement to teach vocabulary and phrases. A partnership with The Old Town School of Folk Music provides the music curriculum with emphasis on singing, movement, instruments, and learning different beats.

Students put on two performances throughout the year showcasing their learning in Spanish and Music with

a Christmas show and an end-of-year celebration in the spring. The early childhood program at SPC encourages independence and persistence, provides motivation, lays a solid foundation in academic skills, and inspires a love for learning to assure students are successful in kindergarten and beyond.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As a Catholic school, SPC is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence, and service. SPC students begin their faith journey in preschool and are supported on that journey with religion textbooks, sacramental preparation, attendance at weekly mass, and participation in service projects, and team-building activities.

Beyond spiritual growth, SPC also supports arts and culture within the curriculum. SPC employs a strong team of Practical Fine Arts teachers who engage students in a rigorous, inclusive curriculum that is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), National Standards for Music Education, and the National Art Standards. They educate the whole child and help develop each student's unique gifts and talents.

Art is simply cherished at SPC. Students in grades K-3 attend art class once a week, while upper grade students experience art class up to two days a week. Lessons are typically designed in a tiered instructional process. For example, third grade created scratch board Grecian urns after they completed a project on symmetry and were able to identify symmetrical and asymmetrical urn examples. In addition, the art teacher has recently launched an extracurricular art club to meet wide student demand.

The school's music program is also flourishing. K-4 students attend music class once a week, while upper grade students take music multiple times a week. SPC's growing band and choir program meets twice weekly. Private lessons are offered on site by professionals, allowing students to work in small groups to gain a better understanding of the content.

SPC's Spanish Program is designed to integrate culture and language, and to develop communication skills. Spanish classes mainly focus on oral communication, with a final goal of students confidently communicating in Spanish. Students in grades 1-3 attend Spanish class once a week and ultimately learn through total physical response. They are enriched with songs, games, online components, books, and writing. Students in grades 4-8 attend foreign language class two and three times a week. SPC's new curriculum for sixth through eighth grade is designed to meet both the national and state foreign language learning standards, and to align with freshman foreign language requirements.

The school's PE curriculum focuses on the different athletic abilities God has given each student. It promotes lifelong learning through physical activity, exercise; students learn to make health conscious decisions, meet challenges, and participate in mentally positive behaviors. Finally, the curriculum promotes fair play and leadership. As a model for inclusion in partnership with Teaching Together Chicago, SPC has hired a gentleman with Down syndrome to assist with class activities. Through this meaningful experience, students have learned to accept differences in people. Grades 1-8 attend physical education twice per week.

SPC also partners with local agencies such as Maine Community Youth Assistance Foundation and the Northwest CASA (Center Against Sexual Assault) to appropriately deliver preventative programs to students including internet safety, the dangers of vaping, bike safety and Erin's Law. SPC has invited guest speakers, including Jodee Blanco, to address social emotional issues like bullying.

To allow for a more comprehensive approach to special area instruction, SPC redesigned the Middle School schedule to allow for elective courses. Each trimester, seventh and eighth graders may choose one elective from topics such as printmaking, robotics, drama, heroes and villains, and fantasy sports. These classes meet daily and provide a more in-depth examination of a particular content area. They also allow for greater academic student choice.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

SPC is committed to an inclusive learning environment and offers high-quality education to students of all ability levels — including those performing below grade level. The school’s dedicated team of professional educators collaborate to provide a multi-tiered system of support.

Within the classroom, students are supported through differentiated instruction. SPC teachers firmly grasp standards to scaffold instruction around the analysis of strategies and errors, making decisions about students’ needs and providing support to meet intended objectives. More specifically, teachers rely on small group re-engagement, parallel tasks, open-ended questions, and evidence-based interventions to help students proficiently meet intended targets.

When students need help beyond classroom instruction — based on data indicating they are at-risk for or already falling below grade-level benchmarks — SPC teachers engage with the school’s two inclusion specialists, who are both licensed special education teachers, and one of whom is Wilson-certified for literacy purposes.

These specialists provide support to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) or 504 Plans through the public-school district, or Individualized Catholic Education Plans (ICEP's). A push-in and pull-out resource approach, rooted in the Response to Intervention Framework, has been established to meet the academic needs of SPC’s diverse learners.

In addition, a wide range of resources, tools, and services are deployed to help struggling students succeed. With respect to mathematics, the online resource Khan Academy provides access to grade-level math content, and it recommends or reassigns specific lessons and reference tools, such as number lines, hundreds charts, calculators, and multiplication charts.

With respect to literacy, multisensory structured language techniques are recommended for students who haven’t acquired the reading and spelling skills to meet intended benchmarks, and also for those who meet the criteria for specific learning disabilities. Other well-known programs are also used to improve students’ fluency and comprehension, decoding skills, understanding of phonemics, and written expression.

3b. Students performing above grade level

SPC supports student strengths across the learning environment to achieve consistent student growth. Teachers utilize professional learning communities to support students holistically — receiving professional development and data analysis coaching from a teacher leader on a rotating basis. Further, assessments, analysis of results, differentiated instruction and implementation of additional supports are all used to identify and support those St. Paul of the Cross students performing above grade level.

Universal screeners like NWEA MAP, ACT Aspire, and Fountas and Pinnell are given to students to determine their reading and Lexile levels, and/or mathematical capabilities, depending on the assessment-type. Assessment results, paired with teacher collaboration, help to inform decisions around high-performing students’ enhanced curriculum.

For one, a variety of leveled texts are available to students. The school’s dynamic language and literary curriculum provides opportunities for students to read books of their choice independently, to read more challenging instructional material with teacher guidance, and to hear teacher-selected and grade-appropriate texts read aloud.

In grades K-4, Words Their Way is the curriculum used to initially assess student understanding of word structure (spelling) and then place them at the appropriate level. Differentiation is further enhanced using technology like Reading A-Z, Raz-Kids, Freckle, and IXL.

Further, advanced-level mathematics is available in grades 5-8 for those students who qualify, based on a summative math exam, the MAP Spring RIT score, and the COGAT Quantitative and Composite Scores. All students take a differentiated math class based on grade-level standards and outcomes.

Finally, SPC provides both challenges and opportunities for higher-level thinking and problem-solving in the form of electives. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders may choose from a variety of elective courses on topics like villains and heroes, fantasy sports, and perilous math.

3c. Special education

Eleven percent of students have a documented ICEP. SPC follows the Response to Intervention Framework model when implementing a multi-tiered system of support. The Response to Intervention team collaborates with classroom teachers to discuss the use of research based intervention strategies that support student learning.

Students receive accommodations relative to their specific needs, including extended time, reading assistance, modified tests and assignments, smaller learning settings, organization and time-management guidance, test-taking strategies, preferential seating, and assistive technology. Teachers and administrators hold biweekly meetings to address concerns for students who may require additional interventions to achieve academic, social, and behavioral success.

In addition, when students are identified as requiring additional support or have ICEPs, classroom teachers ensure their students get the level of support that they need — often by providing tier 2 support within their own classrooms, or by enlisting the assistance of support staff like classroom aides in preschool through first grade, or designated resource teachers.

Tier 2 interventions are provided in addition to the core curriculum and typically involve small-group instruction to address identified student needs. Students who respond adequately to tier 2 interventions continue in core instruction with ongoing progress monitoring. Students who show minimal response to tier 2 interventions may move to tier 3, where more intensive and individualized support is provided by one of SPC's resource teachers in either a push-in or pull-out method.

All teachers have received training in Rush Neurobehavioral Services: Executive Functioning in the Classroom. The curriculum shares many conceptual beliefs with the research regarding the theory of growth mindset. The goal is to provide students with the tools and strategies to tackle problems and challenges with materials management, planning and time management, study strategies, understanding learning strengths, goal setting, and decision making.

Self-assessment and progress monitoring are important components of the program; they allow students to reflect on what skills they already possess and what skills might be beneficial for them to learn.

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

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

This year, SPC has welcomed the addition of two counselors provided through United Stand Counseling Services. Executive Functioning and counseling services are provided individually and in small groups.

Valuable speech and language services are also available on-site to students who meet the criteria for intervention. These additional services are offered through the local public-school district; they have led to greater success of students both in and out of the classroom.

Further, SPC is equipped with a study skills curriculum for students in grades 4-5. This curriculum is also implemented for students with ICEPs, as individual plans are made to enhance executive functioning skills. It is founded in the research over the past ten years that has pointed consistently to the relationship between success in school and competency in executive functioning skills.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

St. Paul of the Cross School is committed to educating the whole child and helping develop each student's unique gifts and talents. Through academics, the parish-school community, and extracurricular offerings, SPC aspires for its students to gain a sense of achievement, a sense of belonging, and a sense of self.

For starters, SPC's loving teachers and administrators create a positive environment where it's safe to take risks and make mistakes. Small class sizes and varied formative and summative assessments allow teachers to understand each student's learning style, abilities, and academic and social needs.

Teacher observations and assessment data inform instruction and lead to differentiated lessons that support each learner and promote advancement. Students' individual goals and their progress are communicated frequently to parents. SPC strives to make every child feel challenged and successful. Students are celebrated for having the motivation and persistence to tackle all academic tasks that come their way — giving them a real sense of achievement.

Beyond helping students feel accomplished, SPC aims to make students feel like they belong. Once again, devoted staff members rise to the occasion. They greet students with a smile, call them by name, and offer high fives or handshakes at all school entrances each morning — making students feel welcomed and important.

Students feel an even stronger sense of belonging upon entering their classrooms, where a collaborative community of learners support one another and help each other grow. SPC's curricula place a large focus on a "share your thinking or learning" component — spurring students to converse about their daily discoveries.

Cross-grade student interactions also build community. For one, all grades are organized into "Prayer Buddies," which allow younger students to engage with older students on a spiritual level once a month. Further, co-curricular service, learning, and athletic programs offered before, during, and after school help students feel like they are part of something larger than themselves.

Conversely, the above-mentioned co-curricular programs also help students to find their sense of selves. From art club and choir, to student council and student newspaper, to roundball and cross country, students have countless opportunities to develop and showcase their leadership skills, talents, and gifts of service. In effect, SPC students uncover their personal strengths and interests, build upon their character, and actualize who they are and want to become.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Families find their way to St. Paul of the Cross School not only because of the rigorous academics and rich extracurricular opportunities offered, but because they are seeking a community where they feel included and at home.

SPC uses a variety of communication platforms to ensure parents feel involved with their child's education, as well as feel included in the many events hosted by the school; Google Classroom and PowerSchool are used for communicating about current grades, learning objectives, nightly homework and important classroom information. Weekly parent mailings are emailed on Thursdays by the principal, and they discuss all school events and various volunteer opportunities. Teachers send home weekly newsletters, too, sharing specific grade-level news. Social media also engages parents and the broader community to highlight notable daily events. Finally, the principal hosts an end-of-year "State of the School" address annually to review each year's successes and to outline the future.

SPC's active Home and School Association (HSA) is a hub for engaging school families in community-

building events, volunteering, and fundraising efforts. Its wide-ranging initiatives include book fairs, munchkin mornings, and parent-night-out and family night out events. HSA also organizes teacher appreciation events each month. The welcome committee pairs new SPC families with mentor families, and also hosts a new-family orientation to assist newcomers in navigating the school.

In partnership with the parish's robust social service ministry, the school participates heavily in social justice initiatives. During the holiday season, each homeroom provides Christmas gifts for the parish Adopt-A-Family program — providing necessities and wish list items for children and adults who, otherwise, would go without during the holidays.

Each spring, fourth and fifth grade science students collaborate with SPC's master gardener to help grow and plant vegetables for the community garden — food that is then distributed from the parish food pantry to those in need. The school also raises funds for a struggling parish in partnership with the parish's Lenten mission and Catholic Extension. In recent years, SPC students have raised funds to help rebuild a church in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, as well as build a new church in rural Arkansas.

Students' sense of belonging to SPC does not end with eighth-grade graduation. Annually, high school alumni return to coach the winter roundball tournament, where fifth through eighth graders participate in a spirit-filled, week-long intramural basketball tournament. Each June, alumni high school graduates return to SPC for a reunion lunch to celebrate their college admission success.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Developing teachers professionally, so they can foster academic excellence in a supportive environment, is a focus of continued school improvement at SPC. At the start of each school year, teachers formulate their own professional learning goals to align with desired areas for growth individually as well as the overarching school goals.

Throughout the year, teachers meet for professional development every Tuesday. This time is used for collegial conversation around research and cumulative student data. It is used to inform instructional groupings, develop and evaluate curriculum maps across grade levels, and to systematically build the instructional capacity of teachers. SPC administrators work hard to ensure teachers feel supported and motivated to provide rigorous academics and emotional support to students.

Teachers are allocated \$1,200 yearly for professional development opportunities like workshops, national conferences, or graduate coursework that support their individual professional learning plans. Teacher teams often attend conferences together to enhance collaboration and grade-level planning.

Each week teachers have grade-level common planning time to ensure student learning is consistent, and the curriculum is comprehensive in scope. Teachers work to map out curriculum in all subject areas, scaffold student learning, share ideas to best address students' needs, and support one another with any challenges they may be facing.

In recent years, professional development focused on overarching school goals of improving differentiated instruction and assessment, and using MAP and ASPIRE data to inform instruction. Teachers were trained on interventions to support tiered interventions. Math teachers collaborated on a hybrid math curriculum, connecting the Math in Focus and Everyday Math programs to ensure a comprehensive approach to the new conceptual math curriculum. Consultants from Fountas and Pinnell worked with teacher teams to develop guided reading implementation in grades K-4, while the teachers in grades 4-8 collaborated on units of study in writing and literature circles.

Recently, SPC hosted seven area Catholic Schools for a workshop on integrating executive functioning skills into the curriculum for all grade levels. In August, Rush Neurobehavioral Center facilitated this two-day training on the research-based executive functioning curriculum. As a follow up to the training, SPC teachers met in grade level units to select specific strategies that would be implemented in each core subject.

Fostering collegial relationships is an important part of professional development at SPC. Two days are allocated for team building and spiritual reflection. The annual team building day in August provides teachers with strategies they can deploy in their classrooms to build community during the first few weeks of school. In February, the faculty gathers for a day long Catholic retreat focused on their training as catechists.

SPC's philosophy of professional development is two-fold: the school aspires to help teachers achieve their own professional learning, as well as provide a solid training and support system for achieving continued school improvement and strengthening the school mission.

4. School Leadership:

The collaborative leadership philosophy and structure at SPC build on the strengths of each team member, creating a positive learning environment that fosters student achievement. The principal and assistant principal are the core of SPC's leadership, with guidance from the pastor.

Although the principal is tasked with final responsibility for every element of administering the school, the principal and assistant principal take a synergistic approach to handling the day-to-day logistics and promoting the vision and direction of the school. They lead by example through open and transparent communication and their regular, visible presence, thus fostering a sense of trust, respect, and support at SPC.

Committed to continuous improvement, and focused on the best interests of the students, they set high expectations for staff but also provide the resources necessary to achieve those expectations. For example, new curriculum initiatives are paired with both professional development opportunities and individual support to facilitate the smooth implementation of those initiatives.

SPC's core administrators also share responsibility for evaluating teachers utilizing Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, a comprehensive approach that emphasizes sound instructional practices and supports outstanding teaching. Evaluation is an ongoing effort, both formal and informal — focused on empowering SPC's teachers to build on their strengths.

Both the principal and assistant principal are readily available to provide guidance, consultation, and mentoring. Direct, constructive conversations about performance, goals, and expectations encourage teachers to strive for professional excellence.

At SPC, teachers are leaders as well. Team leaders work diligently with colleagues to coordinate cohesive curriculum within departments and grades, and from one grade to the next. Teachers model leadership in their classrooms and motivate students to take on leadership roles in student organizations like Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, and Future Cities.

SPC also taps into the leadership strengths, skills, and expertise of parents. The principal works closely with the Parish Finance Council to ensure SPC remains fiscally sound, regularly consults with the advisory School Board, and coordinates with the Home & School Association. Parents serve on the athletic committee, coach athletic teams, lead scout troops and coordinate student service opportunities. Parents also lead annual fundraising efforts to support new initiatives that enhance our students' experience at SPC, such as the STEM lab and playground.

Under SPC's collaborative leadership philosophy, team members take the lead in a variety of ways. Each person contributes to a vibrant school community dedicated to fostering intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth for all students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Despite being a school with a large enrollment, SPC fosters the importance of truly knowing every student's abilities, needs and learning pace. Monitoring student progress is an important and instrumental practice at SPC. It helps teachers use performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and make instructional decisions.

Through a variety of formal and informal assessments, including standardized testing, teachers are able to track student growth and provide individual learning goals to ensure student progress and achievement. Resource staff and intervention curricula are in place for students who are not meeting benchmark goals or achieving above the academic norm.

Differentiation is implemented in the classroom to provide the best curriculum for each student. Through staff development, teachers have been given the knowledge and resources to utilize a variety of methods to differentiate, including literacy circles, learning stations, and open-ended projects.

Students are monitored, and teaching strategies are adjusted regularly using a range of summative and formative assessment strategies to check for understanding. Standardized test data and progress monitoring is used to provide a basis for early intervention. Preschool and prekindergarten grades use a universal screening of basic foundational skills; Grades K-4 use Fountas and Pinnell; and grades 3-8 use ACT Aspire. In addition, NWEA MAP assessments in grades K-8 serve as a resource to help recognize weaknesses and show growth over time. The faculty works together to analyze test scores and identify skill weaknesses and strengths.

Many resources are available to reach each child's social and emotional needs. The local public-school district provides students with a speech therapist and social worker. Students may meet and talk with two United Stand counselors, who are regularly on site.

Teachers meet weekly in grade-level groups to discuss any students for whom they are concerned and create a plan to collaboratively help the child. SPC's response to intervention team also works with teachers to provide strategies specific to a student's individual needs. SPC is proactive in its approach and aims to recognize any concerns as quickly as possible. Parents often compliment teachers on the personalized care and attention their child receives.

The implementation of data from testing, as well as input from weekly teacher meetings, United Stand counselors, and two full time resource teachers have helped staff to better track progress and provide for the individual needs of our students.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Catholic

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No
3. What is the educational cost per student? \$6511
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2956
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 5%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 10%