

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

Official School Name School Of Saint Mary
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 185 East Illinois Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lake Forest State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60045-1915

County Lake County, Illinois

Telephone (847) 582-2526 Fax (847) 234-9593

Web site/URL https://www.schoolofstmary.org E-mail dwieters@schoolofstmary.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. James 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. Ali Chekouras
(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	33	28	61
K	15	11	26
1	19	14	33
2	10	14	24
3	23	16	39
4	19	28	47
5	15	15	30
6	13	23	36
7	20	27	47
8	9	17	26
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	176	193	369

*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
 - 3.3 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 7.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84.6 % White
 - 4 % 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: 3%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(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)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	420
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

All of our students speak English even though they may speak another language at home.

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

50 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>5</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>18</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to 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.	24
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 11:1

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%	96%	96%	97%	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 No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2012

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

The School of St. Mary is an inclusive, family-oriented, Catholic educational community where children receive excellent academic preparation, experience the Gospel, and assume personal responsibility.

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

Visitors to the School of St. Mary (SOSM) immediately recognize key elements of its mission in action. From the youngest Primary Grade Center (PGC) preschooler to the most mature eighth grader at the Upper Grade Center (UGC), SOSM Crusaders reveal fervent school pride, a sense of community, personal confidence, Catholic values, and a deep commitment to serve others, believing one person can make a difference. Since 1917, SOSM's learning community has educated and formed generations of students for successful careers in college and beyond, as alumni assume roles of service and leadership in the community, professions, and the Church. Graduates reveal a strong foundation of knowledge and academic skills, deeply rooted values and character, self-confidence, and personal faith that enables them to become well-respected leaders.

The School of St. Mary currently serves 369 preschool through eighth grade students in Lake Forest, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago. Ten years ago, the school population primarily originated from two neighboring zip codes; today, the student body hails from nineteen zip codes, demonstrating its growing regional appeal. Supportive, devoted, generous, and diverse school families represent a variety of backgrounds, including professionals, dual income households, and business leaders, active duty military, and international transfers. Most families are Catholic. Those who are not Catholic realize the value of a faith-based education.

The increasingly diverse demographics of the school serve as its greatest blessing. In 2015, most of the students from a neighboring Catholic school that closed enrolled at SOSM, bringing tremendous cultural as well as economic diversity. Instead of dividing the school, these families solidified the community; their children brought unique gifts, educational commitment, and tremendous faith. The newest parents and students now serve as leaders in all aspects of the school. Our parent body shares the mission, appreciates the gift of faith-based education, and reminds us that all God's children share common needs and goals. International students provide differing outlooks and cultural experiences, breaking down barriers and broadening perspectives. St. Mary's is fortunate to have Great Lakes Naval Base, the largest U. S. Naval training center in the country, as a northern neighbor. Children of these families benefit from the sound academics and welcoming atmosphere at SOSM. The school offers scholarships to assist military families. For example, Empower Illinois, a tax-credit based assistance program, offers access to a quality education for families who cannot afford full tuition. The parish also offers need-based financial assistance.

In the last decade, the School of St. Mary has consciously pledged resources and implemented the key strategy of differentiated instruction and assessment to encourage and challenge all students to maximize their potential and develop their authentic selves. This initiative intertwines a sincere commitment to inclusive education into the school's philosophy and daily practices. To support inclusion, SOSM has hired a Director of Student Services, social worker, learning disabilities teacher, reading specialist, and nurse. While leveling the playing field for special needs children, SOSM has brought greater acceptance, awareness, and empathy to the general student body. All students contribute to and benefit from the school motto: To Learn, To Serve, To Lead.

SOSM has consciously committed resources, support, and training to faculty in the collection and utilization of data. The school has increased data collection as well as its focus on interpretation. In addition to expanding aimswebPlus assessments, SOSM has added CogAT testing in third through eighth grade. Analyzing the data and assigning research-based programming to at-risk students demonstrates a focus on targeted instruction. The relationship of SOSM with its neighboring public district has created positive synergy, which benefits all children. Public school psychologists provide educational testing as recommended by SOSM Student Services. This enables faculty and families to make informed academic decisions. In 2018, the school purchased special education software from Frontline that professionally, securely, and seamlessly shares data with parents, administration, and providers to maximize the effectiveness of instruction.

Earning the Blue Ribbon Award in 2012 provided unprecedented recognition for the numerous positive aspects of the School of St. Mary. Students, faculty, and the greater community participated in joyful

celebrations. Local newspapers and magazines acknowledged the accomplishment with articles and photos. To this day, SOSM proudly displays the Blue Ribbon plaque. In addition to the fanfare, the most meaningful outcome of this award is the inward focus it brought to all stakeholders. Through summarizing strengths, challenges, programs, and student accomplishments, the community gained a renewed appreciation for the many positive traits of the school. Not taking success for granted, the bolstered confidence of the faculty spurred a continued focus on assessment of programming, instruction, and materials to further afford excellent, inclusive education. Most notably, SOSM has enhanced its technology infrastructure, developed a S.T.E.A.M. program, and built a sensory room.

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

At the heart of the School of St. Mary is the success of the whole child and the development of each child's authentic self. Essential to fostering the social-emotional, academic, and spiritual development of the individual is a strong partnership between family, teacher, and student. The overarching philosophy of differentiated learning, tailored instruction, individualized expectations, and home support is established for each student at SOSM. This ensures the school meets the needs of every child.

Teachers engage in professional development in order to differentiate standards-based instruction. Dedicated funds are allocated for each teacher to take graduate classes, attend workshops, and grow professionally. Both state and Archdiocesan standards serve as a framework for teaching. Additionally, teachers tier instruction based upon formative and summative assessments. Data collection, such as the aimswebPlus platform and chapter assessments, drives differentiated instruction. Teachers constantly dialogue amongst themselves and with parents about instructional modifications for students. Faculty and students engage with a variety of technological resources to enhance understanding, including the use of assistive technology, online textbooks, interactive boards, document cameras, Chromebooks, laptops, and iPads. Families can access appropriate technological resources at home, such as online textbooks as well as math, spelling, and phonics software to reinforce skills. They also have real-time access to grades using PowerSchool and assignments via online homework calendars. There is never a moment at SOSM when a parent does not know how his/her child is performing.

Differentiation of instruction, expectations, curriculum, and assessment applies to all curricular areas, including special subjects. For example, in art, teachers set unique expectations for their students while assisting them with technique. Likewise, the physical education teacher makes certain all students feel successful at their ability level. This extends to after school sports, where the school adheres to a no-cut policy and every student plays.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Differentiation to meet the needs of the whole child is the foundation of the School of St. Mary, and language arts sits at the heart of this foundation. Formal differentiated reading instruction begins in kindergarten, as per state and Archdiocesan standards. Lessons follow a balanced approach using the Reading Wonders literacy curriculum in grades K-5, where students receive explicit instruction in phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, applying these skills when engaging with leveled texts in small groups. Teachers create fluid groupings based upon formal and informal observations and assessments, such as aimswebPlus and Reading Wonders benchmark tests. Tiered instruction allows students to study the same concepts at personalized levels. In the intermediate grades, students engage in book clubs that challenge them with rigorous reading material. Writing and grammar are intertwined, with a strong focus on the writing process. Digital literacy permeates all aspects of the reading curriculum. Students engage with eBooks and leveled readers on a variety of platforms using such resources as Reading Wonders online, EPIC, and TumbleBooks. Parents access these materials at home to reinforce classroom skills. In grades K - 5, Accelerated Reader assesses students' comprehension through the use of appropriate, leveled texts. Children receive tailored, motivating goals and independently read books prior to taking brief online assessments. Teachers continually adjust text levels and goals as needed.

In middle school reading, students examine their ideas of tolerance, relationships, leadership, and values as they experience novels, works of nonfiction, and short stories. Units of study focus on essential questions that express human truths and are built on student-directed, differentiated literature circles. Reading workshop activities, multimedia group presentations, and service-learning projects give students an opportunity to explore literature with peers while building critical leadership and literary skills. Read Theory provides personalized comprehension instruction. Weekly vocabulary lessons in Vocabulary Workshop

culminate in an assessment, checking understanding and mastery. The online textbook provides numerous options for differentiation.

Middle school students also engage in the standards-based, dedicated curriculum in grammar mechanics to foster mature, varied writing. The local public high school recognizes SOSM as a leader among community schools in this curricular area. Differentiation through ability level grouping and personalized, leveled online resources, such as No Red Ink, meets the needs of individual learners. Students receive standards-based summative and formative assessments throughout each unit, which teachers modify to meet the needs of students. To become increasingly fluent and accomplished in written expression and develop critical thinking skills, students learn descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive writing. To experience writing for a real audience, eighth graders enter the local Daughters of the American Revolution essay contest. Thus far, SOSM students have won every year. Additionally, seventh graders are pen pals with ELL students in Kenya through Kenya Connect. Finally, sixth graders are pen pals with students in Chicago. The study of paragraph, letter, and essay structures forms the core of these experiences.

1c. Mathematics

The School of St. Mary challenges every student to realize that math, like reading, permeates all aspects of their lives. SOSM inspires students to think of themselves as mathematicians. Standards drive the curriculum, and mathematics is explicitly taught beginning in kindergarten. Using the Go Math series, teachers instruct students on specific skills by modeling work and projecting relevant publisher videos on a digital platform with the interactive whiteboard. Students then build upon and practice foundational skills in small groups through games, reinforcement from the teacher, and various technological programs. Through the Go Math series, reteach and enrichment opportunities are provided for those who struggle to build foundational skills or students who are capable of applying foundational skills to problem solving.

Beginning in grade three, mathematics instruction is tiered in three levels: approaching, on-grade level, and advanced. Teachers use data from a variety of assessments, such as aimswebPlus, a beginning-of-year placement examination, and articulation with the previous teacher to place students into groups at the beginning of the year. Throughout the year, math groups remain fluid. Depending upon student mastery of specific topics, teachers make instructional decisions unit by unit to best meet individual student needs. Students learn grade-level mathematical skills in each leveled group, but the pace and format for instruction is differentiated by aptitude and understanding. Through the use of individually tailored technology programs, such as Freckle, Sum Dog, and Prodigy, students build and maintain important grade-level skills. Progress and performance is assessed in a variety of ways, including before-chapter, mid-chapter, and end-of-chapter tests that include multiple choice and extended responses.

In the middle school, students continue in three tiers of mathematics instruction: approaching, on-level, and honors. Placement into these groups is determined through analyzing data from the ACT Aspire standardized test, CogAT assessment, grades, and teacher recommendations. Students placed in the honors track beginning in sixth grade complete Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, and Algebra II, respectively. The on-level and approaching students continue with Go Math in sixth grade, and then take Pre-Algebra in seventh and Algebra I in eighth grade. Students in the approaching levels learn grade-level concepts. However, teachers focus on quality over quantity for these students, so they do not become overwhelmed by the number of exercises. Rather, they move at a pace to master the necessary content to be successful in each subsequent level of math. In all middle school tiers, students use foundational math skills to apply problem-solving techniques to solve multi-step word problems. All students at SOSM graduate with at least the completion of high school level Algebra I. Students in Algebra I and Algebra II are required to use graphing calculators to assist in visualizing data distributions and display a variety of complex equations and calculations. In seventh grade, instructors devote class time to educating students on the use of graphing calculators. Through differentiated and tailored learning, students become competent and successful mathematicians.

1d. Science

Since the advent of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in 2013, the School of St. Mary has moved to a hands-on, inquiry-based approach, following both NGSS and Archdiocesan standards to drive

curriculum. Smithsonian Science for the Classroom serves as the text foundation for instruction. These materials encourage students to explore real-world phenomena and problems to draw their own conclusions.

Throughout the primary and intermediate grades, students explore life, physical, and Earth sciences, engaging in exploration and hands-on activities; they creatively apply problem-solving, critical thinking, and analysis. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding and supporting student discovery while providing opportunities for students to make connections to real life. Units of study include life, Earth and space, physical science, as well as engineering. Technology, hands-on lab activities, investigation, and application of learned concepts foster and support learning. Supplemental resources, such as Scholastic News and Brain Pop, enhance the curriculum. Our Reading Wonders textbooks integrate and enhance study through numerous non-fiction scientific selections. Writing projects and field exploration reinforce scientific understanding.

Middle school science instructors possess state licensing qualifications and reveal deep content knowledge. Teachers address the needs of diverse learners and provide modifications to ensure maximum learning for all students. Realizing that scientific learning encompasses far more than fact memorization, instructors adhere to the model of three-dimensional learning and assessment as introduced in the elementary grades. Student-driven inquiry determines lessons. The instruction may not directly ask students to create questions to investigate; however, the questions students ask in the course of a particular unit of study generate the next inquiry. Regardless of the source of the questions, the NGSS are always considered. All middle school students study environmental issues and solutions. SOSM also offers state of the art science and S.T.E.A.M. labs at the UGC as well as field trips.

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

To foster engaged and informed global citizens, social studies instruction begins with the youngest students. At the primary level, project-based learning and small group collaboration engage students with their community. Teachers incorporate the universal skills of reading, writing, and speaking, while students interact with primary and secondary sources. First graders explore and write about Christmas around the world with an emphasis on customs. Third graders combine reading historical biographies, writing third-person reports based upon the biographies, and presenting first-person commentaries in period dress. Project rubrics, class contributions, and essays reveal student understanding. Cross-curricular connections incorporate nonfiction social studies topics in the literacy curriculum. Technological resources like Scholastic News and WebQuests enliven history.

Middle schoolers study American history, learning about people of all ethnicities, backgrounds, religions, and genders. Sixth graders study Native American societies. Seventh and eighth graders explore primary sources like the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, enhancing understanding and contextualizing U.S. history within global history. Social studies inspire the eighth-grade field trips to Washington DC and the Illinois Holocaust Museum. Seventh graders visit the Old World Wisconsin and the state capitol. Teachers assess understanding with projects, like making kachinas and creating new forms of government. Formal assessments include the state and federal constitution exams. Students participate in the National Geographic Geography Bee, advancing winners to the regional level competition. A variety of service opportunities engage students in projects that benefit communities around the world. Studying current events spark motivated students to raise money and awareness for causes like the Amazon rainforest fires. Student Council fosters civic experiences.

Adopting online textbooks, purchasing new classroom globes and maps, and including virtual reality experiences for the eighth grade in their study of ancient cultures has modernized our curriculum. At all grade levels, students connect past with the present.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

In four sections, SOSM's preschool includes two, three, and four year olds, including an all-day four-year junior kindergarten option. Knowing that children must feel comfortable to learn, teachers encourage parents

to visit prior to the first day of school to foster relationships, explore the classroom, and display a framed family photo. Working closely with families, teachers frequently share parenting articles as well as specific suggestions to foster a strong social, emotional, and academic foundation.

The curriculum provides developmentally appropriate experiences for children to cultivate their social-emotional facility in conjunction with the development of language skills, encouraging positive verbal communication in addition to conflict resolution and negotiation. Stressing independence, the teachers provide activities that build confidence and focus on self-help skills.

Using thematic standards-based units, preschool teachers weave language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, religion, and the arts into daily instruction through center activities as well as direct instruction. Children experience music, art, and gross motor activities daily. Centers provide countless hands-on, exploratory opportunities where students socially interact with peers and cultivate interpersonal skills. Circle time provides direct instruction, language experiences, stories, songs, and movement activities. Sunform, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, as well as Happily Ever After provide a solid literacy foundation for four-year-olds.

Teachers measure the impact of early childhood programs on school readiness and success in kindergarten through developmental assessments based on the learning standards and observations. They offer formal assessments for parents four times a year and conferences twice a year. Kindergarten teachers frequently confer with preschool staff to assure students possess the necessary foundational skills.

Preschoolers transitioning to kindergarten demonstrate an understanding of school expectations, self-help skills, facility with writing and cutting, awareness for the thoughts, feelings, and personal space of others, familiarity with numbers and counting, as well as letter name and sound awareness.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

SOSM strongly recognizes the value of holistic education in developing the authentic self of children. A coordinated fine arts presentation in a faith community setting allows children to connect body, mind, and spirit in a unique and profound life-learning experience. Students gain creative proficiency through twice-weekly classes in music and visual arts. Instruction aligns with state and Archdiocesan standards to further student cognition via integration with social studies, mathematics, science, language, and STEAM curricula. Teachers embrace the Kodaly methodology. Instruction in stringed instruments is available to all students in grades K-8; in grades 4-8, the school offers a band. Second, third and seventh graders learn the recorder. Frequent student participation in dramatic offerings, concerts, community service performances, singing hymns at weekly Mass, community displays and art shows, and competitions ensures program vitality and accountability while providing leadership training.

All kindergarten through eighth students engage in biweekly art instruction. Auditory and visual learners benefit from videos, demonstrations, and class discussions when encountering art. Students thrive and integrate learning through storytelling and writing reflections about the artwork. Numbered grid drawings appeal to visual learners. Dance and music assist kinesthetic learners to understand the color wheel. Students make movies, which they present during Catholic Schools Week; these projects necessitate that the students follow multi-step directions and employ problem-solving skills. In the primary grades, technical skills (how to hold a pencil, sewing, tying knots, etc.) help children in other developmental areas, such as penmanship and fine motor skills. Formalized exposure to renowned artists and styles of expression begins in kindergarten. In the upper grades, these essential skills are extended through creative, higher-level thinking directives, which address creating individual strategies for initial investigation through project completion.

Similarly, following curriculum guidelines, physical education and health classes meet biweekly. Teachers scaffold lessons, so students learn specific techniques that lead to combining multiple skills in games. Lessons incorporate healthy competition, sportsmanship, and teamwork. Exposing students to various activities to encourage them to lead healthy and active lifestyles serves as the primary goal for these courses. Instructors rely on modeling when teaching skills. Ongoing assessment of skills occurs throughout lessons with explicit re-teaching directed towards students who have not mastered the technique.

SOSM offers instruction in reading and speaking Spanish in preschool through eighth grade as well as Latin in fourth through eighth grade. These classes align with local high school curricula and expectations. In the early grades, the language acquisition theory of Blaine Ray, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS), addresses multiple learning styles. Students of varying abilities utilize comprehensible input provided by the teacher to acquire language through listening, reading, storytelling, and acting. Singing in foreign languages is a frequent component. Students acquire language through this immersion method at a faster rate than traditional language-teaching programs, bringing students beyond average proficiency by the conclusion of the year.

Modern, attractive, up-to-date media centers at both campuses invite student engagement and provide offerings in printed media as well as online streaming. Current technology is part of media instruction, as students in fifth through eighth grade formally learn how to complete and submit work via individual, school-provided, one-to-one Chromebooks. Kindergarteners through fourth-grade students have access to both iPads and laptops for small or whole group instruction. Technology programs include Typing Instructor, Lexia, Read Naturally, and Accelerated Reader.

At the UGC, the S.T.E.A.M. lab offers a safe and structured environment where related standards fully integrate into the curriculum. In S.T.E.A.M. experiences, creativity and critical thinking assume a higher value than following prescribed, step-by-step instructions. Students research and create their own processes and methods in problem solving while documenting and sharing experiences. S.T.E.A.M. projects include creating water filtration systems, programming scientific data, and designing robots.

Character education occupies a cherished spot in our educational philosophy. Students experience the richness of the Catholic faith in regularly scheduled religion classes. Values education permeates instruction in all subjects. Students receive public recognition for acts of empathy, thoughtfulness, kindness, and responsibility. To develop leadership qualities, students participate in Student Council, National Junior Honor Society, service projects, and buddy activities where older Crusaders model behaviors. For example, middle school students forego holiday parties to sing for residents of local nursing homes.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

An essential aspect of meeting students' needs is identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. SOSM employs aimswebPlus, a standards-based assessment that screens and monitors K-8 students' reading and math progress in the fall, winter, and spring. Upon completion of this testing, the student services team schedules data review meetings involving teachers and specialists to determine the need for tiered support.

For children performing below grade level or demonstrating health impairments that impact learning such as ADHD and anxiety, the Director of Student Services schedules bi-monthly Problem Solving Team meetings to address unique needs as presented by teachers. Prior to the meeting, the director formally observes classrooms and collects data. The team brainstorms strategies and interventions to support specific students. Teachers follow suggested protocols as discussed at the meeting and report progress.

Instructors provide differentiated instruction within the classroom for Tier 1 students. They modify assignments and assessments. Tier 2 students receive extra reading support in the computer lab for 60 minutes weekly to improve fluency and comprehension using Read Naturally or visit the reading Resource Room for 120 minutes of weekly interventions. The reading specialist monitors the progress of Tier 2 students weekly to evaluate intervention effectiveness. If adequate progress has not been demonstrated, the team modifies programming. Students who perform below grade-level standards for math benefit from small group pull-out or push-in instruction with manipulatives.

Tier 3 students receive daily support for a minimum of 150 minutes per week in the Resource Room. The reading specialist employs research-based, systematic programs to meet the needs of each student as referenced in the special education section below. When beneficial, student service team members provide

push-in services. This is especially helpful in both math and writing. To determine the intervention success, teachers monitor Tier 3 student progress weekly.

3b. Students performing above grade level

SOSM offers a variety of enrichment opportunities for students revealing a consistent aptitude for higher-level thinking and the ability to process complex information beyond their peers. ACT Aspire, aimswebPlus, CogAT, and classroom assessments support the identification of students who consistently perform above grade level and may benefit from the extra challenge. The school employs a rubric with various data points to assist in the selection process. Ultimately, the teachers and student services team meet to evaluate the data.

Students in kindergarten through second grade who reveal beyond grade-level reading skills participate in book clubs. They meet in small, grade-level groups to study literature and engage in discussions related to character development, setting, and plot. They extend their thinking with related projects. Accelerated Reader promotes targeted practice to increase comprehension. Teachers instruct advanced students to seek, read, and interpret higher-level literature. Similarly, classroom teachers provide math extension activities for students who demonstrate mastery of grade-level concepts. They also assign independent, advanced learning modules through Freckle software. Third graders receive math instruction in leveled, flexible groups that enable acceleration. Those who demonstrate beyond grade-level skills focus on more complex problem solving to extend their thinking.

Weekly enrichment programs for fourth and fifth graders engage academically gifted students in challenging, project-based learning. Teachers trained in gifted education encourage cooperative teams of students to ponder real-world problems, research, and explore possible solutions.

In middle school, honors programs challenge students with an advanced curriculum. The literature program encourages pupils to read quality poetry and prose, expand genres, and examine content using higher-level thinking skills. These courses develop analytical, narrative, expository, and persuasive written expression. Students revealing advanced math skills receive accelerated instruction, which enables them to place out of freshman courses in local high schools.

3c. Special education

Tier 3 students who demonstrate significant learning struggles typically qualify for an ICEP (Individualized Catholic Educational Plan) or 504 Plan. These students have specific measurable yearly goals to accomplish. They benefit from daily explicit instruction using a systematic research-based reading program such as Wilson Foundations, Wilson Reading System, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, Rewards, Lindamoodbell, PCI Reading Program, RAVE-O Toolkit, or Raz-Kids.

The reading specialist currently provides direct instruction to 36% of the kindergarten, 24% of the first grade, 17% of second grade, and 13% of the third-grade populations. The number of supported students decreases due to early intervention.

In 2018, SOSM made the financial decision to purchase Frontline, software for special education and interventions, so documentation is online for easy access. This enables the student services team to streamline distribution and align processes with neighboring public schools to make a case for formal testing. Upon eighth grade graduation, many students attend the local public high school, so having similar documentation makes the transition seamless.

The local Learning Disabilities Association, which consists of community members who have children with special needs, made a generous donation in 2019 through a grant application process to purchase sensory room materials for the Upper Grade Center. Students take brain breaks from their daily schedules in the sensory room, which includes a rowing machine, trampoline, stationary bike, lava lamps, weighted blankets, bean bags, calming lights, coloring books, and fidgets. It permits students with identified needs to self-regulate. Currently, the school is developing a plan for a Primary Grade Center Sensory Room.

Third graders falling below the 25th percentile on the aimswebPlus math assessment receive instruction in a class co-taught by the learning specialist and a classroom instructor. They are exposed to a multi-sensory approach to math and benefit from pre-teaching and re-teaching of concepts.

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

At this time, SOSM does not offer a formal ELL program, as all current students speak English. Yet, an increasing number of students speak English at school but speak the native languages of their parents at home. Celebrating and supporting cultural differences, the school welcomes families from numerous countries. It encourages families to expose their children to multiple languages. When parents seek guidance about speaking multiple languages with their children, the school suggests using the native language at home as the language of love and speaking English outside the home.

Children who switch between two languages benefit from good teaching practices such as scaffolding, previewing vocabulary, using visual aids, peer collaboration, speaking clearly, and extended response time. In the early years, dual language students may require additional support identifying and pronouncing English vowel sounds. The reading specialist targets these important skills and provides support as needed for non-fluent students. The school offers a Homework Club to assist children as they write assignments in English. However, the magic of immersion with youngsters quickly erases the challenges of mastering a new language.

SOSM has welcomed students from European as well as South and Latin American countries. Generally, these families have prepared their children for the move, providing English instruction in their native country. The school also seeks a staff member or parent to help translate until the student feels comfortable. When possible, Admissions creates partnerships with supportive peers and families sharing similar backgrounds. This year, a new Venezuelan family enrolled at SOSM from a local school at which they sensed discrimination. By pairing this family with one sharing similar roots made their transition to our community smooth. No matter the grade level, the school supports students who move from another country or have non-English speaking parents.

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

Realizing that students with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges as well as reap academic and social benefits, the School of St. Mary recognizes the invaluable contributions of a full-time social worker. The social worker adheres to the school philosophy of providing an environment that is safe and conducive to teaching faith, academics, and interpersonal skills, enabling students to confidently meet their potential.

Addressing a variety of issues, including mental health, family stressors, academic concerns, as well as social, emotional and physical disabilities, the social worker proactively meets with students individually or in groups to help them face an assortment of life's challenges. On a regular basis, 8% of the population utilizes social work services. In addition to providing tools for students, the social worker assists staff with proactive strategies in navigating obstacles to learning. This includes performing time on task assessments, consulting on behavior plans, acting as a liaison with parents, referring students for outside support, consulting with the nurse on health concerns, and supporting children who benefit from frequent sensory breaks.

SOSM employs schoolwide prevention programs and practices that teach positive behaviors, promote social-emotional development, and ensure a climate conducive to learning. In conjunction with the social worker, classroom instructors teach the social-emotional curriculum Second Step to further enhance Christian behavior through age-appropriate, real-life scenarios, role-playing, and discussion. As needs arise, the social worker presents relevant lessons to grade level girls or boys, an entire class, or the whole grade to promote greater understanding of relevant topics and invite open discussions with students.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

All stakeholders at the School of St. Mary engage, motivate, and support students to be the best they can be! Administration plans and coordinates special events to engage students with one another. Children in first through third grade pair with UGC buddies in sixth through eighth grade. In addition to sitting together during all school Masses, they engage in special events throughout the year like shared lunches, crafts, and service projects. For example, in December 2018, the administration coordinated a special all-school trip to see *Mary Poppins Returns* at a local movie theatre. Students traveled with their buddies by bus and enjoyed special treats while watching the movie together. Second and eighth-grade buddies share the responsibility of presenting the Nativity to the school at Christmas and lead the community in the May Crowning prayer service.

Many teachers offer before and after school activities at the School of St. Mary. Catering to the needs of many students, activities include crafting, art, Quiz Bowl, cooking, and math skills. Homework Club, which began in 2016, is offered Monday through Thursday after school to support students in homework completion. This club is led by teachers and support staff, and it has proven popular among parents as well as students. In the summer, teachers encourage students to support their academic growth, experience new activities, and grow in their faith. Such programs offered each summer include Crusader Camp for primary students, Vacation Bible School, a creative writing program, and math skills camps.

Teachers at SOSM greatly care for and personally connect with their students. Each student feels valued, supported, and appreciated. Teachers know students' individual interests and abilities and incorporate these interests into the classroom environment. In addition, teachers witness students' unique passions and interests outside of the classroom by attending special events such as sporting events, recitals, and musicals. Lastly, service to others is an essential component instilled in all children at the School of St. Mary. Students participate in various service projects throughout the year and actively volunteer in the community. For instance, third and seventh graders prepared food at Feed My Starving Children. Grade levels organized numerous bake sales at lunch to support various charitable causes. The entire school gathered socks and snacks for a local community center that serves low-income families. In response to hurricane devastation in the Caribbean, PGC students supported families with building materials and household goods.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Adhering to the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," SOSM families, community helpers, parishioners, as well as educators interact to provide a rich, nurturing environment for students as well as a supportive atmosphere for faculty.

Parents assume school advisory capacities, partnering with administration and teachers in conjunction with parish staff. Each constituency participates on the School Advisory Council (SAC) to examine various aspects of education, including finance, curriculum, marketing, technology, athletics, legislation, and service. Recently, SAC members in partnership with school leadership and the Archdiocese have carefully reviewed and edited the bylaws of SAC. They are currently creating a strategic plan for SOSM.

Parents' Association (PA), our school fundraising entity, annually procures over \$300,000 and aligns parents with school needs. Approximately twenty parents lead this support group. To foster inclusivity in 2014, PA strategically modified its name from the Parents' Club. These volunteers creatively strategize on ways to reach their lofty fundraising goal. Taking into consideration the giving restrictions and preferences of families, PA has recently moved from the model of one major, annual fundraiser to an assortment of opportunities for families and friends to donate. The Annual Fund appeals to parents who wish to support the school without attending events. PA sponsors numerous community-building activities, including a 5K, Fall Family Festival, Trunk or Treat, Turkey Trot, Fun Run, grade level gatherings, and spring socials. This year, PA re-established the traditional Gala to foster friendships, fun, and fundraising.

Several parents have recently seen a need to form a Mothers' Club, primarily a friend building organization. Their events include summer playdates, informative programs, float construction for two community parades, and social gatherings. Mothers' Club provides a forum where parents can discuss common issues of raising children.

Both campuses offer volunteer opportunities, including room parents, talent show or play directors, mystery readers, field trip chaperones, library assistants, and ambassadors. Last year, in conjunction with the parish, SOSM sponsored its first Day of Volunteering. Parents and parishioners joined to assist with school landscaping and maintenance.

SOSM engages and communicates with parents and community members through a variety of inclusive strategies. Frequent parent coffees encourage families to informally interact with various school leaders. Enlightening programs invite speakers to share information on such topics as the value of play, executive functioning, and transitions. Formal electronic publications including the Principal's Weekly Newsletter inform families of upcoming events in addition to student achievements.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Creating a professional culture at the School of St. Mary begins with the administration. School leadership actively solicits and communicates with its numerous stakeholders, including the pastor, families, students, School Advisory Council, and Parents' Association to create annual goals based on perceived needs, testing data, and surveys.

Since differentiation and meeting the needs of all students serves as the core philosophy of SOSM, professional development often focuses on strategies and programs that develop instructional skills in these areas. Two years ago, the school instituted an early release one Wednesday each month to accommodate training sessions. Sometimes an outside presenter will lead the professional development. The school also takes advantage of the wealth of faculty expertise by encouraging teachers to present on topics about which they are passionate. For example, the Director of Student Services has presented an in-service on test modifications. The social worker has shared ideas about meeting the needs of students who demonstrate spectrum disorders. The head of the math department has encouraged strengthening computational skills beginning in the early grades. Likewise, the faculty has the opportunity to meet in grade level or subject area groups. Additionally, administration emboldens faculty members to seek advanced degrees.

In today's culture, teachers need to acquire knowledge about non-educational topics that affect the health and wellness of students. SOSM faculty and staff participate in online training with regard to bloodborne pathogens, concussion protocols, sexual harassment, and other relevant issues.

As SOSM is a Catholic school, all faculty members continuously progress through catechist formation courses to gain a deeper understanding of faith and ways to explain important concepts to their students. This professional development is a combination of online classes, professional presentations, and reflection. All volunteers, faculty, and staff additionally learn how to assure the safety of students through the Virtus program, created by the U.S. Conference of Bishops, to combat abuse.

Teachers and administrators receive ongoing technology training. Topics include but are not limited to creating grade books in the student information system, sending emergency email notifications, modifying Web sites, designing Web pages, and streaming educational videos.

The school works in close conjunction with local law enforcement to provide active shooter and emergency training. In fact, the local police department frequently acknowledges SOSM for its commitment to remaining current on emergency procedures as well as willingness to share its facilities, allowing officers real school training experiences.

4. School Leadership:

Although the two campuses of SOSM are separated by four miles, they are linked by a unified mission and multifaceted leadership team. The school relies on two primary educational leaders. The principal spends most of his time and efforts at the UGC campus where he is in close communication with the pastor and business office. At the PGC, the assistant principal manages the daily functioning of the campus and contributes to all-school programming, admissions, and governance. At the UGC, a dean of students supports the principal by overseeing attendance, discipline, scheduling, and supervision. The leadership at both campuses communicates frequently and adheres to an open-door policy, empowering faculty, staff, and other stakeholders an opportunity to voice opinions. Under the direction of the pastor, Catholic school administrators are also considered faith leaders.

The principal and assistant principal receive support from members of the student services team. A director of student services actively supports both campuses, primarily focusing on remediation and acceleration, as well as health concerns. Likewise, a social worker moves between the campuses to provide direct instruction, behavior management, in addition to group and individual counseling.

Leadership promotes the philosophy of joint decision making. Faculty and administration collaborate on the budget, hiring, calendar, report cards, curriculum materials, as well as school policies. The team works with several teachers from both campuses to create and implement an annual Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The most recent and historical standardized test scores combined with data from the 5 Essentials Survey serve as a basis for developing a roadmap for enhancing the instructional environment, student needs, and specific aspects of programming.

Faculty mentoring serves as a vital aspect of school leadership. The principal and assistant principal coach teachers on a daily basis, offering advice, ideas, and encouragement related to simple and complex issues. Both administrators have received training in the Danielson Framework domains. They employ this knowledge when formally observing classrooms and evaluating teachers, using a goal-setting process, three walk-throughs, two informal observations, and one formal observation. Administrators gain important knowledge and share strategies to improve instruction and learning.

SOSM leaders actively engage students, staff, and stakeholders. They greet children, call students by name, work with struggling learners, build spirit, and supervise students at recess as well as during arrival and dismissal. Most importantly, they set the standards for a positive school culture where every student and employee feels valued.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

SOSM continues to evolve as a learning community. One fundamental value drives the effective decision making of the institution: a conscious commitment to serve all students in an inclusive community. SOSM prides itself on accepting children whose needs can be met through solid pedagogy in conjunction with the support of trained personnel. Children with physical and intellectual impairments, spectrum disorders, health restrictions, and social-emotional concerns attend SOSM.

Parents in the community have numerous, outstanding educational options, including fine public institutions with abundant special education resources. However, many families choose SOSM as the appropriate environment for their children due to the supportive, family-oriented, welcoming nature of its community. In meeting the needs of all children, the school leadership consciously budgets for increased, specialized personnel. Using Proportionate Share funds from the State of Illinois in addition to a substantial budgetary commitment, a full-time social worker, reading specialist, learning disabilities teacher, and a Director of Student Services meet student needs and support teachers as they modify curriculum. The social worker leads small groups of students in preschool - 8th grade. She also provides one-on-one support and guidance for individual children with social-emotional needs, often liaising with community services and outside professionals. To assist teachers, she observes children in the classroom and develops positive, behavior plans. The reading specialist and learning disability instructor assess students, administering interventions for those who perform below the local averages, which exceed national averages. They also provide push-in services during reading and math. As a strategy for inclusion, the Director of Student Services, a certified learning disabilities teacher, meets the growing needs of students and provides continued support to teachers and parents. As a strategy for inclusion, the Student Services Department leads the Problem Solving Team meetings, where teachers receive support and strategize on how best to meet the needs of diverse learners. This process encourages thoughtful collaboration to support student success.

SOSM has formed valuable partnerships with local schools, therapy centers, community organizations, and professionals to deliver special services. Its cooperation with public schools has greatly facilitated the process of formal educational testing to inform instruction. The school has created agreements with therapists to offer speech and language instruction as well as OT and sensory support within the school.

Ultimately, every child is entitled to an education. The fact that families choose a faith-based school should not deprive their children of the services required to meet their needs.

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? \$9036
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$4218
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%