

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

Official School Name Saint Thomas More Catholic High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 450 E Farrel Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lafayette State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 70508-7108

County Lafayette

Telephone (337) 988-3700 Fax (337) 988-2911

Web site/URL https://stmcougars.net E-mail stmadvancement@stmcougars.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* Ms. Anna Larriviere E-mail alarriviere@diolaf.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Lafayette Tel. (337) 261-5529

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Hunter Trahan
(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	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	112	114	226
10	100	123	223
11	99	117	216
12 or higher	134	125	259
Total Students	445	479	924

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.4 % Asian
 - 2.8 % Black or African American
 - 1.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 94.6 % White
 - 0.3 % 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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	972
(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):

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: 19

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %

29 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>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>12</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

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	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	62
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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 15:1

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	96%	96%	95%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	242
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	5%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	1%
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. 1998

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

St. Thomas More Catholic High School educates students to be seekers of truth, individuals of character, and "God's servant first."

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

PART III - SUMMARY

St. Thomas More Catholic High School (STM) sits on 45 acres of land, in an area that has become the center of growth for Lafayette, Louisiana. Beginning in 1982 as a consolidation of two Catholic high schools, STM has expanded into a far-reaching educational community serving 12 owner-church parishes and the surrounding civil parishes (counties).

STM has been a three-time Blue Ribbon school, most recently in 1997-98. Over the last 20 years, this open-admission school has developed a culture of continuous improvement. The STM teachers have worked hard to increase ACT test scores to meet the application guidelines, with 2018-19 scores being the highest in school history.

Accredited by AdvancED, now Cognia, the school provides opportunities for academic, spiritual, athletic, and extra-curricular pursuits. The curriculum consists of Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, Honors, and College Prep classes. Because of the school's commitment to quality education for all students, STM offers an Academic Support Program (ASP) to assist students with specific learning needs. In 2020-21, the school will implement the MORE Program, which is designed to meet the needs of students with identified learning differences who require MORE accommodations than the traditional classroom can offer. In 2007, the school created the Options Program to provide modified academic inclusion for developmentally disabled students. This program has been so successful it has drawn families from other areas of Louisiana and out of state.

In the 2011-12 school year, STM implemented a 1:1 tablet program designed to integrate technology throughout the curriculum. This initiative emphasizes problem-solving, global awareness, collaboration and communication skills. School leadership has been instrumental in providing personnel and funding to ensure the growth and support of this program. One of the greatest areas of emphasis has been professional development, which directly affects student learning, engagement and success.

New and expanded programs have resulted in a need for new and redesigned spaces. Strategic planning has played a key role in the addition of two classroom buildings. These classrooms have not only benefited teachers but have also given more space for the Options Program. The Options classrooms now include a kitchen, a washer and dryer, and the PAES (Practice Assessment Exploration System) Lab. Four repurposed classrooms make up the DREAMS (Design Research Engineering Art Math Science) space, which accommodates STEM electives for students interested in engineering and computer science, as well as those investigating careers in journalism or video production. The DREAMS space includes a fabrication lab, innovation space, design space and broadcasting studio. The fabrication lab has industrial workbenches, 3D printers, a computer-operated router, hand and power tools and fabrication supplies. The innovation space has multiple workspace and seating options plus white boards and writable surfaces, along with materials for creating projects. The design space is used for the digital graphics/animation course but can be reserved by any teacher when students need to collaborate. The broadcasting studio is home to the weekly TV production CougarCast. It includes an anchor desk designed and built by students, a green-screen wall, interview spaces and state-of-the-art equipment and cameras.

The school has added a second gym and improved athletic facilities for football, track, baseball, softball and tennis. Beyond facilities, students have more opportunities to participate in school activities through sports like lacrosse and fishing or organizations such as the Board Game Club and STEM Club. The most recent strategic plan includes building a chapel, a fine arts building, and an athletic and fitness center.

As STM has grown, the advancement department has expanded to improve alumni relations, communications, admissions, marketing, and fundraising. The website has been designed to enhance recruitment efforts, stakeholder communication, and alumni involvement. The annual publication Forever More highlights academics, extra-curricular activities, students, and alumni. A robust Alumni Association allows STM graduates to reconnect with one another through social activities and to become a professional resource for future STM alumni. Throughout the year, the alumni association holds events on campus, at local businesses, and in cities throughout the South.

Service and spiritual development are the heart of the school. Over two-thirds of the student body participate in and/or staff the Campus Ministry program. Activities include retreats for all grade levels, an annual mission trip during the Easter break, 10,000 Feet in the Colorado Rockies during summer, opportunities for praise and worship, and student Bible studies. Students can also participate in Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Cougars for Life. Parents 4 Light provides a way for parents to get involved in campus ministry. Almost every student organization provides community service, including the junior class-sponsored Hopefest. STM graduates have continued to find ways to serve the school, the community and abroad.

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

STM's college-prep curriculum is designed to meet state and national standards, as well as to address recommended literacy, information and technology skills. ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education), NAMLE (National Association for Media Literacy Education), and AASL (American Association of School Librarians) standards are reviewed annually to help teachers incorporate these skills into their lessons. Counselors use ACT/PreACT data, along with current grades, to determine appropriate placement in courses--College Prep for the average student; Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment for the student who can handle an elevated pace, higher volume of work, deeper analysis of content, and more rigorous instruction. AP classes follow the curriculum set by the College Board; Dual Enrollment classes are taught by STM teachers through the University of Louisiana in Lafayette. Additionally, virtual classes are offered in subjects such as Latin, AP Spanish and American Sign Language. Results from the ACT and preACT assessments are disseminated to teachers who review the data with their departments to identify strengths and weaknesses.

The use of technology continues to transform STM's curriculum. While each department effectively uses specific technology, several programs are used across the curriculum. Moodle is the school's learning management system. Teachers post course assignments, deadlines, and content; they also collect and assess work on Moodle. Many departments use Microsoft OneNote class notebooks in a similar way. Students use Noodletools to cite sources and track their research process. The program also allows teachers to assess student work online. The school subscribes to Turnitin.com to help students avoid plagiarism.

STM teachers also use Newsela, an online program that offers news articles, primary sources and other high-quality nonfiction. Articles are published at five different reading levels based on lexiles; the multiple levels allow teachers to differentiate instruction. Built-in assessments measure comprehension and allow students to move to higher reading levels.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Two online programs used in the English curriculum allow students to reflect on their performance and create learning goals for future assignments; both programs offer multiple differentiated assignments, allowing students to target their weaknesses. Criterion is a web-based instructional writing tool that helps students plan, write and revise their essays, giving students feedback on their writing and suggestions for improvement. Students can revise their writing multiple times to improve, and they use Criterion for at least five in-class essays each year. No Red Ink is designed to build better writers. Teachers can assign grammar practice or exercises on other aspects of writing, i.e. building a thesis or incorporating quotations. Exercises use sentences tailored to each student's interests based on a survey. The program is personalized so that students can work on their weaknesses and achieve mastery before moving to the next level. One indication of these programs' effectiveness has been an increase in English ACT scores from 25.5 in 2018 to 26.2 in 2019.

One goal of the English department is that students become better readers. Summer reading is required at all levels, and most teachers have an outside reading requirement during the school year. The department uses Accelerated Reader to hold students accountable, while allowing them a choice in what they read.

To improve critical reading skills, English I teachers designed a nonfiction unit using Newsela. The unit builds resilience by pushing students to "keep trying," modeling the way teens attempt to master video games. Level 1 focuses on knowledge and comprehension. Students read five articles in Newsela from a pathway like sports or social issues. After choosing a reading level of an article, students read, annotate and take a quiz. If they are unsuccessful at one level, they can choose other strategies or reading levels in order to improve their grades within a designated time.

Level 2 focuses on application and analysis. Students work on several assignments. First, they must find a connection between two of the articles they read in level 1, write an essential question that can only be answered by reading both articles and then find a third article in another database. In an annotated works cited, students explain how the articles relate to the essential question. In a tone analysis, students contrast both sides of a pro/con article. Students identify each author's purpose for writing the article and the key words that convey the author's tone. Students also write an essay comparing an article they have read with a new one. They discuss which article is more useful in forming their own opinions about the topic. Students then create a graphic organizer comparing one of their articles to an assigned memoir, or they create a meme to convey the satire from an assigned Onion article. Grades for this level are based on the quality of work and the number of tasks completed.

In Level 3, which focuses on evaluation and synthesis, the final product is a persuasive essay. To that end, students view Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and President Obama's "Speech to Students." They analyze style techniques such as allusion and restatement and persuasive techniques such as concession and logical argument. The essay must incorporate several elements of style and persuasion. Re-do opportunities are available for essays that do not reach the highest standard on the first attempt.

1c. Mathematics

Based on ability and interest, students follow one of five tracks in math. Each track requires at least four courses. The department meets quarterly to discuss content, assessment, delivery, technology, projects, and pace. Teachers of the same courses stay in contact daily to ensure horizontal alignment. They also develop common questions on tests, especially midterm and final exams. Specific areas that need improvement--such as exponents, linear equations, and probability--have been addressed by the department. Also, the math curriculum has been aligned with ACT college-ready standards. Teachers assign three ACT spirals per quarter; ACT spirals are assignments that allow practice on previous topics, so students do not forget material already learned. Math teachers also begin each class with a problem of the day: a bell ringer problem, a review of topics already covered, or a preview of that day's lesson.

The 1:1 program has transformed the math curriculum. The Fujitsu laptop converts to a tablet with pen capability, which allows students to "write" math and show their work digitally. In the Microsoft OneNote shared environment, teachers can send assignments, check student work and demonstrate how to solve problems. Students are able to refer back to the teachers' examples at any time because the work becomes part of the Content Library in the Class Notebook.

Another online program is MathXL, which works directly with the textbook. Teachers can assign homework within MathXL. The students work through the problems and get instant feedback on their progress. The program also has testing capabilities; however, most math teachers use pencil-and-paper tests to practice for the ACT.

Some of the technology used is specific to particular courses. For example, Desmos is an online graphing calculator used mostly by algebra students. It gives students a "lab" to work through. The dynamic manipulations show students the properties the teachers are describing. Some teachers use Desmos to generate blank graphs for tests or graphed functions for analysis.

Geometer's Sketchpad, a program used extensively in geometry classes, allows students to construct figures, take measurements and manipulate geometric shapes to see patterns and make conjectures (hypotheses). Students can explore functions and create graphs in an interactive way that is engaging and promotes understanding. Additionally, teachers use the program to draw precise figures for worksheets, homework, quizzes, and tests.

Some math teachers use Khan Academy as a homework tool. Like MathXL, it gives students instant feedback, and it requires them to work a certain number of problems correctly before moving to the next topic. Mastery is paramount. Teachers sometimes use the Khan Academy videos to save time that would be spent making their own.

The biggest strength of the department is its cohesiveness. The teachers support their coworkers by stepping in when needed for the benefit of all students. For example, the entire department is accessible to any student for extra tutoring or makeup tests, regardless of whether that student is in the teacher's class or not. They cover each other's classes when a teacher is absent so that students do not miss content.

1d. Science

Incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards along with state standards, the science curriculum includes the use of programs like Explore Learnings: STEM Cases--where students solve real-world problems while in the role of a STEM professional--or KerbaLEDU, which allows students to practice physics and engineering skills by constructing and testing rockets virtually. Performing experiments, research, graphical analysis and using the virtual reality program Cospace are among the activities which promote critical thinking in the sciences. For example, after studying collision time and force, physics students had to figure out a way to package and mail a Pringle potato chip--without it breaking--to the teacher. Computer science and engineering classes extensively utilize problem-based learning and problem solving. These students often tackle projects needed on campus; recently engineering students designed and created a display case for the library. Students decided on materials that would work and used a 3D printer for parts as they built the case to house a scale model of a local historical building. As a culminating activity in engineering classes, students dress for success as they pitch their original product designs to a guest panel.

Another course that is increasingly popular takes advantage of the southern Louisiana area. The environmental science classes started a butterfly garden and a recycling program in the 2017-18 school year with major assistance from a \$5000 Green Ribbon Schools grant from the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission. Under that grant, the teacher also expanded STM's "Aquaponics in the Classroom" program. Students grow plants in a system where fish water provides all nutrients for the plants to grow. Engineering students have played a large part in building the systems used for this program. Currently, the environmental science classroom has a large stock of channel catfish in three tanks used exclusively for Louisiana native fish. Each spring the students hatch paddlefish eggs in one of the tanks. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' "Native Fish in the Classroom" program has supplied most of the necessary equipment for students to take care of the eggs and juvenile fish for several months before the fish are released back into the wild. Fish from the STM tanks have traditionally been released in Henderson Lake in the Atchafalaya Basin.

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

The social studies department helps students become better readers and works to create informed citizens who can think critically. Newsela is used in civics, world history and American history to improve comprehension of nonfiction. Since the reading section of the ACT includes a passage related to the social sciences, practice reading similar passages can improve student scores. Another strategy that helps students improve reading comprehension is the use of primary source documents. Students must read critically to understand the document and to interpret it in terms of what was happening at the time the piece was written.

To deepen their understanding of citizenship, students in honors civics and AP Government classes are required to attend a meeting where policy is created, for example, a city/parish council or school board meeting. Students can tweet about the meeting to the teacher or submit a more traditional summary; they also take a picture of themselves at the meeting as proof of attendance.

The connection of the past to the present is central to social studies; world history classes complete a research project which addresses that concept. After conducting preliminary research on five well-known world figures, students choose one they want to study. Students research their subjects to look for traits that could be applied to a contemporary job. They find a present-day career that uses their subject's skill set; for example, today Leonardo daVinci might be qualified to work as a game designer. Students create a current resumé and cover letter outlining their person's qualifications—both so important in the online world of job applications. Finally, the students dress for a job interview conducted by the teacher, who asks questions

based on their research. Although the research is important, the teacher is also interested in soft skills needed--firm handshake, eye contact, and confidence.

1f. For secondary schools:

STM has a counselor for each grade level as well as a college and career counselor. Counselors visit classes multiple times a year to discuss college entrance requirements and testing such as PreACT, PSAT, and ACT. Grade-level counselors meet individually with students at least once a year to review progress, discuss future college and career goals, and make recommendations to help students achieve these goals.

Most STM graduates go on to college rather than immediately joining the workforce. However, computer industry credentials can be earned by students who work for the help desk. These students earn Fujitsu certification; some also earn CompTIA A+ Certification, which demonstrates proficiency with computer hardware and operating systems. Help desk students have also presented at local and state technology conferences; STM graduates use their help desk experience to get jobs while in college; after earning degrees, several have been hired by CGI, a global technology consultant firm.

As sophomores, students understand the relevance of their classes and the importance of maintaining good grades when they complete the college research project for their English class. Students research three colleges and ultimately write a persuasive essay about which one is best for them. For the first step in the process, the college and career counselor introduces Naviance, an online program that helps students explore college options. If students don't know which colleges they want to research, they can narrow their choices by choosing criteria like location, public vs private, large vs small, etc. Naviance links students to the colleges' websites and gives admission requirements and other information about the colleges that students are investigating.

The counseling department hosts a Career Day every other year. Ninth grade students participate by taking interest inventories through Naviance and exploring careers based on those results. Tenth through twelfth grade students attend three sessions with STM alumni as panelists in different career areas. Students are scheduled for sessions based on their career interests. Career Day connects current students to the alumni and helps students envision their own futures after graduation.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

STM provides courses and resources to challenge and educate the whole student. The fine arts department incorporates student collaborations, real-world performance, creative thinking strategies, professional art exhibitions, and rigorous timetables into a curriculum which includes visual and performing arts. Art students show successfully in statewide competitions like the one sponsored annually by the George Rodrigue Foundation. Guitar class and advanced theater offer students a chance to experience the arts in a less traditional way--no previous music education is required for guitar, and advanced theater offers hands-on experience building sets for the school musical. Students take advantage of the 1:1 environment by using drawing and music programs like the Adobe Suite and Smartmusic. The media arts course is specifically designed to expose students to art in a technology-driven world.

The State of Louisiana requires two years of physical education with health education incorporated into PE I. Students who play competitive sports schedule athletic PE or training & conditioning. Life & recreation and fitness are upper level classes which focus on creating lifetime health and fitness goals. The PE teachers meet regularly to discuss strengths and weaknesses of students' physical testing results, then create a plan to address weaknesses. Workouts can be modified based on physical ability. Pre- and post-physical testing measures speed, endurance, body composition, power and strength.

Learning a second language gives students a broader worldview and teaches them problem-solving and critical thinking skills. To diversify learning for students, French and Spanish courses use tech tools such as Extempore, a program that allows assessment of oral proficiency, and Conjuguemos, a program that

provides engaging activities for practice and quizzes. After learning vocabulary and grammar concepts, students work with partners to translate sentences and/or paragraphs. Along with listening and speaking assessments, the teachers use pre- and post-test data to adjust instruction. Students in advanced classes spend time deciphering authentic texts, including songs, poems, and short stories.

Technology and innovation courses include TV production, digital graphics/animation, computer architecture, independent study in technology, and computer technology applications. Many of these courses have been a natural outcome of the 1:1 program. For example, computer architecture and the independent study class were added to give students the experience needed to repair computers while operating the help desk. Help desk students also troubleshoot problems with software or hardware. Assessments in these project-based courses use rubrics and student/teacher critiques, while targeting presentation skills. Rubrics are constantly re-evaluated and revised to address students' weaknesses. First started as a club, TV production became a class when the administration recognized the value of the advanced skills students were obtaining.

The library has been recognized three times in the state for its exemplary program, most recently in 2018-19. Librarians provide training in using the databases as well as programs such as Noodletools. Since the librarians emphasize the ethical use of information, they assess bibliographies for research projects. One example of the collaboration between the librarians and the teachers is the literary criticism research paper done in third quarter by all English III students. When the juniors begin the research phase, each class section is divided into three groups, allowing the librarians and the teacher to mentor each student through the process of finding solid sources and citing them correctly.

Religion classes deal specifically with faith, conscience, and character formation. The department uses the curriculum issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; ninth grade students study scripture and Christology, tenth grade church history, eleventh grade the sacraments and morality. Seniors take two semester courses--scriptural apologetics and responding to the call of Jesus Christ. Students are introduced to the concept of servant leadership in their religion classes. Although service hours are not required, by the time students graduate, they have performed many hours of service in the community.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

When students apply to STM, their cumulative academic progress is reviewed by members of the counseling and ASP (Academic Support Program) departments. Students at high risk (low standardized test scores and/or low grades) are placed in the ninth-grade study skills class and ASP. One of the ASP coordinators, the academic interventionist, meets with these students regularly and encourages them to take advantage of their teachers' tutoring times. ASP students are provided vocabulary support, extra tutoring, graphic organizers, and alternate methods of instruction. American Sign Language is a virtual course used primarily for ASP students to meet the state's foreign language requirements for graduation. Counselors and the academic interventionist closely monitor students at medium risk (low standardized test scores). Any student struggling in a class can request a tutor from the National Honor Society.

Students with diagnosed learning differences often require additional support. To meet those students' needs, the school will implement the MORE Program next year. Acceptance to the college prep program will be based on a psychological evaluation less than three years old, previous school records, and interviews with the students and parents. An Individual Accommodation Plan will address the specific needs of the student. MORE classes--offered in English, math, science, and social studies--will provide a small teacher/pupil ratio, individual and classroom accommodations, and differentiated teaching. Students will learn to advocate for themselves and improve their study skills through organization, time management, and goal setting.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Based on school performance and standardized test scores, students can schedule more rigorous classes. Honors and AP courses are offered in English, math, science, social studies, foreign language, and fine arts. Dual Enrollment courses are offered through the University of Louisiana Lafayette for English IV, Advanced Math-Functions and Statistics, and American History. These advanced classes push students to work at the highest level.

Students in Honors English I and II participate in the Wordwright Challenge, a national reading competition which requires analytical reading of prose and poetry. Teachers receive 25-35 vocabulary words, a reading selection and questions. Students are quizzed on the vocabulary; then in the same class period, they read the selection and answer the questions. In 2019, English II students ranked 13th nationally in the competition, and an STM student was one of the two highest scoring sophomores in the country.

Last year, a team of three seniors in AP Computer Science took on the project of building an electric therapy chair for a young girl with mental and muscular deficiencies. Adapting a Fisher Price Power Wheels Wild Thing was supposed to be a quick, “only the electronics” job, but it turned into much more over the course of five and a half months. The 250 hours of coding, 3D modeling and printing--and even more hours of soldering--resulted in a fully Bluetooth-controllable chair. It included a button that allowed the child to operate the chair for her therapy. The team saw their work in action when they presented the chair to the family.

The Honors English IV classes made the front page of the local newspaper last year with their TED-style talks inspired by the reading of George Orwell’s 1984. The students developed their talks around ideas such as surveillance from personal devices (targeted ads on social media) and blind trust in the government. Students in the video production class filmed the talks, and the teacher uploaded the videos to the TED-Ed Student YouTube channel for vetting and publishing.

3c. Special education

STM provides academic support to its most unique population through the Options Program. To be considered for the program, students must have a documented exceptionality of mild/moderate learning disability, be able to function independently and must be able to communicate basic needs. Academic classes are taught in the two Options classrooms; the students are mainstreamed into religion classes and sometimes art and other electives. The Options students have access to a special collection of library resources.

The students work on job-training skills in the PAES Lab (Practice Assessment Exploration System). This class is set up like a job site where students clock in every day, get their assignment, set up their work station, read and understand the task (or listen and follow verbal instructions) and complete their job in a timely manner. The PAES lab has 264 jobs in five different domains at six different levels of difficulty. The students’ work in the lab gives teachers an idea of where the students will be most successful in order to place them in a job after leaving STM.

The Mentor Program is open to any student who wants to develop friendships with the Options students and include them in school activities. The 200 mentors meet with the students once a week before school or during lunch to socialize. An elective mentor class is available for juniors or seniors to interact with Options students daily. Mentors are paired with a different Options student each week to help that student perform PE activities. They also serve as the core team for the Mentor Program, helping to plan events, and usually join the Options students for events off-campus such as Special Olympics. These mentors learn to make accommodations for individual students and ensure the activities are fun and create movement.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

A variety of course levels makes learning accessible to all students. All teachers are required to offer tutoring twice per week, and the four grade-level counselors intervene when students are struggling academically. In addition to the traditional end-of-year awards for achievement, every fall the Academic Pep Rally celebrates student success, recognizing those who earned Honor Roll for the previous year while showcasing student talent. Each semester, Breakfast of Champions recognizes students for their willingness to help classmates, their kindness or generosity. In April, each staff person nominates one Top Cat, someone who displays a positive attitude, is considerate, and demonstrates traits of a model student. Over 100 students are recognized at the Top Cat mass. Senior athletes receive recognition from the state athletic association for maintaining at least a 3.5 GPA. Annually, the local university holds an academic signing at STM for seniors offered scholarships.

Building positive relationships with new students starts in the summer. Incoming freshmen are introduced to STM when they attend tablet training and receive their laptops. They have lunch with the STM ambassadors, who answer questions about the typical high school day and life at STM. During freshman library orientation, the librarians and English teachers conduct one-to-one interviews with students about their reading habits. The librarians make book suggestions and monitor student reading through the first quarter, emphasizing the close connection between reading and success.

Students continue to build relationships through the many activities offered at STM. There are clubs for every interest; this year the school added the Board Game Club, surprisingly popular since it meets on Friday afternoon. STM students are competitive, and their success is evident in the many awards the groups have won. For example, student artwork has hung in the US Capitol, and the competition dance team has won 23 national championships. Currently, the STM athletic program is ranked 36th in the country by MaxPreps, America's source for high school sports. After the weekly mass, recent accomplishments of individual students, organizations and sports are applauded by the entire assembly. Achievements are also highlighted on the school's social media platforms and on Friday's CougarCast. A Fine Arts Showcase is held every spring, and a literary magazine is published annually highlighting student writing and art.

Many teams and extracurricular groups create ways for Options students to be included: as team managers, as assistant drum major, or as active competitors in special events. With the support of their teammates and opposing players, these students are cheered on as they swim the last race, make the last goal or play a special inning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent and community involvement are key to any school's success, and good communication is essential to building strong relationships with stakeholders. Advancement has expanded the use of social media to advertise school events, student accomplishments, and school activities. More on the Way, sent weekly via email to parents, advertises coming events and celebrates achievement. Forever More is published in the summer and mailed to all stakeholders--parents, teachers and alumni. Parents actively support all sports, the arts, the library and especially Campus Ministry. Parents serve on boards and participate in the strategic plan process. Volunteer opportunities are offered to every parent at the beginning of each year; these opportunities allow parents to see the hard work of both the faculty and the students. Parents are invited to attend all events which recognize student achievement--weekly masses, Breakfast of Champions, Top Cat Mass with a reception, Academic Pep Rally, spring awards ceremony and Fine Arts Showcase.

Teachers post assignments and grades online so parents can see what and how students are doing. Mid-quarter progress reports are also posted; parents of students in academic difficulty are contacted by the teachers. Grade-level counselors call for meetings with parents and the student's teachers if the student has an issue or difficulty.

Alumni involvement dramatically increased after the position of alumni director was added to the Advancement department. Involvement has also increased as more alumni are parents of current students. The alumni director has worked to provide social and fundraising events such as a two-day fishing rodeo and alumni softball tournament. Proceeds from these events benefit the school's operational budget as well as providing tuition assistance through an alumni scholarship. The alumni association assists in the coordination of class reunions and hosts social events in Houston, Austin, Dallas and New Orleans for alumni living in these areas. An alumni address is given annually during Homecoming, and alumni are invited to tailgate before the game. For fun and networking, an alumni crawfish boil is held every spring. Career Day allows alumni to reconnect while giving back to STM.

The school partners with local hospitals and the Junior League to provide awareness programs such as Sudden Impact, No Fear No Future (dangers of distracted and impaired driving), and the Health Symposium for those students interested in healthcare careers.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

That teachers feel valued and supported is evident--23 administrators, teachers, or staff have worked at STM for over 20 years, and 24 alums are currently teachers/staff. New teachers are mentored by someone in their department and attend monthly meetings with the academic interventionist during their first year at STM. These teachers discuss calendar events, school policies, teaching strategies and grading procedures.

PTC provides lunch during in-services in August and an elaborate breakfast one Friday per quarter. PTC also supports teachers in the classroom by offering quarterly \$500 mini-grants for additional classroom resources. For example, the grants have provided review materials for the AP Government exam as well as Vernier probes that allow data collection in science classes and labs.

Leadership has provided a robust professional development budget that supports both in-house and off-campus PD opportunities. Commitment to professional development is underscored by the administration's use of federal Title II funds, approximately \$30,000 a year, as well as an additional \$30,000 built into the school's annual budget, for faculty to attend workshops and conferences. Resources such as an on-site network administrator, a technology integration specialist (TIS), and the student-run help desk have helped teachers to incorporate technology effectively in the 1:1 environment.

Teachers are required to earn 30 professional development hours per year, but ample opportunities are provided. Teachers have two unscheduled periods daily; one of these is for continuing education provided in-house two to three times per month, i.e. redelivery from conferences; teaching ideas and strategies used successfully by other teachers; resources and/or services available from the counseling department, the library or the tech staff.

Teachers can also use their PD time to collaborate with other teachers or to meet with the TIS to work on the required personal digital growth plan. The goal of the TIS meetings obviously differs depending on the teacher. The TIS encourages less proficient teachers to try a new tech tool with their classes or work toward mastery of level one of the Digital Toolkit (programs like Moodle, GSuite, Microsoft 365, or the grading program). More proficient teachers work with the TIS to strengthen project-based learning in their classes. They look for ways to add a digital element or make other changes that would improve student understanding and engagement. For example, one religion teacher decided to incorporate Minecraft into his group project on medieval monasteries. Instead of only writing a report, students recreate the monastery in the virtual reality platform using details from their research.

4. School Leadership:

STM utilizes the dual leadership model of president/principal. The president and principal report directly to the school's Chancellor, a priest who is pastor of one of the 12 owner-church parishes. The president of the school oversees the business and operating budget. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, including the Options Program and technology as well as academics and athletics. The principal has worked at STM for over 20 years; she moved from teaching chemistry and physics into the

assistant principal position and from there to principal. She continues to build on the relationships she developed while in the classroom. She understands the teachers, and they are comfortable talking to her about concerns and needs. The DREAMS spaces grew out of the principal's vision of increasing STEM course offerings and incorporating more problem-based learning. She ensures that the budget includes funding for students to compete in robotics, broadcasting, engineering and Science Olympiad events.

The school's leadership team also includes the assistant principal (academics and student life), dean of students (discipline, emergency operations, facilities, assets/inventory), advancement director (media and communication, alumni, admissions, stakeholder relations, strategic plan and fundraising), athletic director (oversees Louisiana High School Athletic Association compliance, and 14 athletic teams including varsity, junior varsity and freshman teams) and religion administrator (oversees religion department and Campus Ministry with over 600 student ministers). School stakeholders make up an Advisory Council to the Chancellor. These stakeholders are current parents; half the council is voted onto the board, and half is appointed. This council advises the Chancellor on school policies, long-range strategic planning, and budget.

STM's Continuous Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement. These plans are reviewed annually by faculty, staff and leadership and on a five-year rotation are analyzed through focus groups made up of students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders. A SWOT analysis (looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) is done regularly to ensure that continuous improvement is ongoing; this analysis allows the school and its stakeholders to make informed decisions that lead to improved student outcomes. Focus areas as identified by the National Catholic Education Association include School Mission, Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Educating the Whole Student, Governance and Leadership, Operational Vitality, Comprehensive Advancement Initiatives, and Supporting a Superior Faculty.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Whether it can be called a commitment to improvement or a recognition of the importance of life-long learning, a culture of service and using one's talents permeates STM and continues beyond graduation. Last year students performed over 21,000 hours of service locally and on mission trips to Puerto Rico and Haiti.

In the last four years, STM has contributed over 75,000 cans to the local food pantry as part of the CANstruction building competition. A second school-wide project, a Toys for Tots drive, is organized by the social studies department; this year, students filled 53 large bins provided by the Marines.

Hopefest, which has raised nearly \$1,000,000 in 13 years, is a music festival produced by the junior class in the spring. Half the net proceeds go to the Options Program, the other half to a local non-profit chosen by the class. The most important aspect of Hopefest is the relationships students build with the people served by the event. In 2014, after selecting an elementary school with a low-income population as a recipient, the juniors started a free tutoring service at the school. An alumnus from that junior class still organizes students, other alumni, and parents for the tutoring program.

Five years ago, an alumna started a ministry of feeding the homeless every Thursday evening. The school's faculty, clubs and athletic teams sign up to assist in this effort. This year, the school provided tables and chairs for a sit-down Thanksgiving meal for the homeless; fifteen football players--along with other students, parents and alumni--served the meal.

Every spring the Campus Ministry director leads a team of 80-90 students, parents, and teachers to Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico, where they provide services to four different orphanages and a women's shelter. For several years, the help desk director has organized mission trips for alumni to build and maintain computer labs in schools, first in Costa Rica and now in Haiti. The French Club has organized drives to collect shoes or school supplies for the children in Haiti.

STM's commitment to service would not be possible without the dedication of teachers and staff, who are involved in the student projects. The teachers also serve in other ways; for example, the campus ministry team has helped develop programs at schools across the country. Art teachers have presented their innovative lessons at national conferences. Since the beginning of the 1:1 program, teachers have showcased ways to use technology in their curriculum at state and national conferences. The technology staff has outlined the student-run help desk program and explained the professional development model STM started. Every part of the school community works to fulfill the mission of educating students to be seekers of truth, individuals of character, and "God's servant first."

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? \$9880
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1413

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 1%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 8%