

U.S. Department of Education
2021 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. Jason Huther
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Carmel Catholic High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1 Carmel Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mundelein State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60060-2499

County Lake

Telephone (847) 566-3000 Fax (847) 566-8465

Web site/URL https://www.carmelhs.org E-mail jhuther@carmelhs.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. Bradley Bonham E-mail bbonham@carmelhs.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Carmel Catholic Tel. n/a

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. Richard Caffarelli Jr.
(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, leave .blank*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) 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. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

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	142	129	271
10	143	103	246
11	135	159	294
12 or higher	108	147	255
Total Students	528	538	1066

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7.9 % Asian
 - 4.7 % Black or African American
 - 19.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.8 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 64.5 % White
 - 2.1 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: ≤1%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	1109
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Chinese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
54 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 56

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %

26 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	13
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	68
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
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.	10

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 16:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	296
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	90%
Enrolled in a community college	8%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	1%

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. 2007

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

A Christ-centered college-preparatory school, Carmel Catholic empowers students to be servant leaders with zeal for faith and scholarship, embracing tradition of dignity, diversity, and justice.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

To begin the 2020-2021 school year, Carmel Catholic High School implemented a hybrid learning model, with two distinct cohorts of students attending in-person instruction and one cohort of students who chose to remain at home full-time. Under this model, the two in-person cohorts of students attend instruction two days each week. For example, cohort one attends on Monday and Tuesday. Cohort two attends on Thursday and Friday. The at-home cohort learns synchronously by tuning in to classes live via webcams in each class. Wednesday is an eLearning day for all students, with an emphasis on clubs and activities after classes conclude. Most of Carmel’s clubs, activities, and athletic offerings were operational from the beginning of the school year, although the state of Illinois restricted some athletic offerings. Carmel operated under this hybrid model until mid-November when the state of Illinois called for a “soft” shelter in place order amidst rising Covid-19 cases. From mid-November to mid-December, all of Carmel’s classes were remote, with students learning synchronously as teachers broadcast classes live from the school. In March of 2021, Carmel returned to full-time, in-person instruction for all interested students while still supporting remote learners.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

The word family is often used to describe the Carmel Catholic High School (Carmel) community. With several alumni who are currently parents and remain involved in school operations through various roles, the school's sense of community goes a bit deeper as generations of families have called Carmel their home away from home. Carmel also has a strong presence within the local community in which it resides - Mundelein, Illinois. Mundelein is an hour north of the city of Chicago and serves mostly middle-class residents with a notable Hispanic/Latino population. Many families from surrounding areas also attend Carmel, with students coming from over 100 different elementary schools and four different counties. Carmel's belief is that educational programming is stronger when directed at maintaining and strengthening the bonds between its people and surrounding communities. Thus, community strength serves as a haven for all of Carmel's efforts - be they academic, spiritual, or extracurricular. Carmel educates the whole person, all within the reinforcement and support of the school's community of families.

Students at Carmel are kind, hard-working, and motivated. Although Carmel does administer an entrance exam, well over 90% of testers are admitted. Carmel takes pride in the diversity of learners among its student body. Students are accepted with a wide range of academic, social, or emotional challenges; Carmel walks with them through the high school experience so that they may grow in all areas. Carmel students strive to be well rounded. Carmel is not the kind of environment where cliques thrive, as acceptance and inclusion are inherent standards of the mission that drives the school. As evidence of this claim, so many of Carmel's key activities combine students from different academic, extracurricular, and social groups. With over 80% of Carmel's student body participating in athletics alone, the cross-over participation of students among various pursuits is salient. To fully immerse new students in the school culture, Carmel hosts an extensive onboarding program for freshmen, beginning in the summer of their transition year to high school. This experience allows new students to learn about the Carmel culture of enthusiasm, ethic, and inclusion before they even step foot on the campus freshman year.

Carmel remains dedicated to its Catholic mission while at the same time remaining religiously inclusive. Each week, Carmel students will experience a vibrant and orthodox practice of prayer and Catholic liturgy. Of equal emphasis, however, is finding ways to have non-Catholic and non-Christian students and adults participate and even lead in liturgical experiences and retreats. One unifying aspect of the school's mission is a dedication to service to the local, regional, and global community. Although Carmel has service requirements for all students, most go far beyond the requirements and end up living a lifestyle of service.

Even during the pandemic, Carmel students displayed creativity and dedication to various service opportunities to help feed local communities, to be there for those who are lonely or sick, to tutor students who may be struggling with eLearning, to cheer on and support health care workers, and more generally, to serve where needs are apparent. Such a dedication to service in a time of great need, Carmel students display grit and perseverance to continue as servant leaders even while restricted in activity due to the pandemic. Apathy is not a response one would notice from Carmel students. Since March of 2020, times have been difficult for many, and Carmel students rose to the occasion with empathy and action. A vital lesson taught to students is that the best way to connect the heart and the mind is with the hands. Action and service have been a defining characteristic of Carmel students since the school's inception; this fact is highlighted even more now with such dire needs among many communities.

Carmel is also distinguished by its four Blue Ribbon awards over the years. This recognition of academic excellence is a particular point of pride, which Carmel promotes and includes in all publications and advertising. Ample empirical evidence displays the rapid growth of Carmel students, no matter how or where they come to Carmel. This fact helps Carmel attract strong student candidates who are looking for a high-quality education as well as outstanding faculty members who want to enhance the strong program that is already in place. With student growth constantly the standard by which effectiveness is judged, everyone at Carmel embraces the growth mindset, with students as benefactors.

Since Carmel's last Blue Ribbon award in 2007, the necessary fluidity of Carmel's curriculum has been harnessed within EduPlanet21, a tool that allows school administration to observe gaps and overlaps in

learning targets. With schoolwide curriculum units stored in this tool, it serves as a springboard for cross-curricular discussion. Additionally, the position of Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning now encompasses both professional development and curriculum, as these two elements of teaching are intrinsically connected. Finally, a new three-year Professional Development Rotation for faculty emphasizes job-embedded, sustained, and personalized options for growth. Targeting leadership, research, and formal classroom observations, the program's overall goal is to improve instruction by engaging in passion projects.

Through the pandemic, Carmel's mission and effectiveness remained intact. In March, the state of Illinois closed all schools. During this period of eLearning, classes remained synchronous, with teachers and students meeting via Zoom. Clubs and activities met virtually and in-person when able. Even the prom king and queen were recognized through a special video ceremony to provide a semblance of normalcy for students. The culminating activity of the year - graduation - was still held in July so that seniors could receive the recognition they deserved after four years of study and growth. To begin the 2020-2021 school year, the pandemic has provided fewer hurdles, as Carmel students now come to campus to learn in-person while students who choose to remain at home learn synchronously via classroom cameras. Although the pandemic still has its grip on education processes, the goal at Carmel is to make the school experience as normal as possible by engaging students synchronously as much as possible.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Carmel’s most recent accreditation progress report from AdvancED in 2017, coupled with the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, called for a renewed focus on data-informed instruction, curriculum review, and academic differentiation. Using this input as a path for improvement, MAP Testing for achievement and growth was implemented in 2018; English and Mathematics Departments analyze individual student progress each semester, adjusting instruction as needed. Data collection is also emphasized within a new, three-tiered professional development plan established in 2018; personalized research projects produce a wealth of input towards course placement and instruction. A three-year curriculum review process established by department leaders in 2019 ensures systematic updates of the curriculum within the EduPlanet21 platform, highlighting not only learning target redundancies and omissions but also cross-curricular opportunities. To differentiate Carmel from area schools, course offerings have expanded to include Business INCubator, a full slate of engineering courses, college preparatory courses in four core departments, and a dual credit program with 25 course offerings projected for fall 2021.

Carmel looks forward to the faculty’s examination of the “grad at grad” in the fall of 2021, which will identify what faculty and staff want students to know, understand, and do before graduation. A comprehensive process was initially undergone in 2009-10. This dive into curricula and assessment practices will help ensure that Carmel students know what faculty want them to know. Employing Wiggins and McTighe’s Understanding by Design curriculum framework, faculty will adjust learning standards and outcomes to meet the needs of current and future students.

Carmel proudly requires eight consecutive semesters of theology coursework for all students, supporting the school’s mission to empower students through faith and scholarship. Reflective reading, thinking, writing, and discussion are hallmarks of these courses, including Foundations of Catholicism (required for freshmen) and Christian Lifestyles. Senior electives include Women of Faith and Catholicism in the Media. Classes can often be found enjoying meditative walks in the Mary Garden or in the chapel peppering teachers with questions of faith during popular “open mic” sessions as teachers integrate personal faith experiences.

The English Department advances students’ skills in oral communication, literary analysis, research, and composition. To serve a broad scope of learners, course level offerings range from College Preparatory (CP) and Upper College Prep (UCP), up to Honors, AP, and Dual Credit - the same for all core subjects. Assessments include oral self-critiques of writing portfolios and written analysis of character traits spanning several works and themes.

The Mathematics Department offerings are diverse, allowing mathematics instruction tailored to need. Courses range from Algebra I CP through Calculus AP and Statistics AP. Independent study is allowed for Calculus III and advanced computer science coursework. Students engage in partnered problem solving, as well as self-paced online practice through MathXL. Over 90% of Carmel students receive four years of math instruction. Peer tutoring is available with Mu Alpha Theta honors students.

Science offerings begin with physics for all freshmen, which partners well with their algebra coursework. Chemistry and biology are then also required, followed by an abundance of elective options. Zoology, Forensic Science, and Dual Credit Environmental Science are popular options, all meant to spark curiosity and understanding of surroundings in students with varied abilities. Students show what they know through collaborative labs, summative assessments, independent projects, and reflective inquiry.

Social Studies coursework prepares students to problem-solve future issues and to contribute to a democratic society by examining past and current trends. Students find their voice in a global society through research, careful reading, analysis, and discussion. Summative tests often incorporate in-class discussion and debate concepts. Carmel has been a proud Democracy School member with the McCormick Foundation since 2009, indicating a commitment to championing social justice, fostering diversity, and providing quality civics education.

Carmel's response to students' and teachers' needs during the pandemic continues to be significant and successful. Being a 1:1 school, each student is required to use a school-approved device. At-home connectivity for all students is a priority, with the school providing hotspots for those in need. A spring 2020 shift to all-remote instruction required a new daily schedule with all classes meeting daily for 45 minutes - an approach determined by teacher and student survey input. Each week saw four days of online instruction, with Wednesdays providing time off for planning, coursework, tutoring, office hours, and teacher meetings. Assessments shifted to open-note or more subjective formats. The school took a markedly compassionate stance with grading: seniors were allowed pass/fail options for their classes, and faculty eased late work policies. While a no-harm grading policy was not adopted, ultimately the teachers' curricular adjustments and slower pacing proved beneficial in providing continuous, quality instruction. Counselors, Teachers, and Deans regularly coordinated on students struggling with full eLearning. Community satisfaction from June surveys was clear: 80% of parents felt teachers adjusted well to remote instruction, and 81% of students felt successful during eLearning.

All classrooms were equipped with cameras allowing for synchronous instruction starting in August 2020. Faculty spent the summer learning about the challenges of managing two audiences at once, adapting curriculum and instructional materials to satisfy both online and in-person learners, and altering assessments. Connectivity checks, engagement practices, Zoom security measures, online lab tools, and open-note testing are now the faculty's new vernacular.

Academic administration and department chairs developed a hybrid schedule, in which students are divided alphabetically into cohorts: 50% of the students are in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays each week, with the other 50% in-person Thursdays and Fridays. Class periods are 70 minutes (same as the pre-pandemic schedule) plus an extra ten minutes to focus on remote learners, perform sound and video checks, and take attendance. Each school day contains three or four classes; a later start allows time for teacher prep and Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings. On Wednesdays, all seven classes run for thirty minutes each in the morning with all learners remote. Wednesday afternoons allow for department meetings, office hours, tutoring sessions, and Connected Learner activities. Born from June parent and student survey results indicating students' disconnectedness from the community, Connected Learner activities engage and inform. Options include senior college application seminars, pet photo contests, freshman mentorship sessions run by upperclassmen, and Corsairs Can Calm outreach pathways for those feeling isolated.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

The curriculum at Carmel is designed to best prepare students for college. Knowing that students often choose college programs with a specific focus, Carmel has ensured programming to advance the skills of students no matter their potential emphasis in college. The Understanding by Design (UbD) curriculum framework is well-positioned to help each learner progress at an appropriate pace. For those who move more carefully through the material, UbD keeps the student focused on a larger, controlling understanding while methodically moving step-by-step through a sequence of concepts. Students of all levels can organize their learning through understanding, not just recalling.

Despite Carmel's successful college-preparatory focus, with over 98% attending college beyond graduation annually, the school's learners are increasingly diverse in their abilities, academic backgrounds, and goals. Thus, Carmel's latest course offerings attempt to meet these needs. College Prep level courses have expanded from English 09 and Algebra 1 to include English 10, Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-calculus/Trigonometry, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Learning Resource, Spanish 1, and Spanish II offerings. Dual-Credit options, numbering over 20, have nearly tripled in the last three years as Carmel leverages partnerships with Loyola University and the College of Lake County. Popular dual-credit courses are Chemistry, English Composition, and a full battery of Engineering courses (earning a "Project Lead the Way School" distinction), while newest offerings include Environmental Science, Criminal Justice, and The Human Ecological Footprint. Engineering, Algebra, and Latin courses are available for 7th and 8th grade partner school students who seek early academic challenges.

Experiential education is offered via Stagecraft, Theater Tech, and Student Tech internships through which students earn pertinent certifications, such as Raspberry Pi. Broadcast students collaborate on biweekly live NBRS 2021

news broadcasts for the community while yearbook and journalism students produce respective publications. Budding entrepreneurs expand their skills in Business INCubator courses, culminating in their product's financial support by community investors during Pitch Night hosted on campus each spring. The Carmel Cafe - an on-campus coffee shop that opened in fall 2019 - is one successful result. Carmel's College and Career Resource Center Counselor provides in-class, personal, and level-specific guidance on college search and application processes while also assisting those with post-secondary plans involving the military or trade school.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The 2016-2020 Strategic Plan calls for an increase in differentiated course offerings to serve all Carmel students and help distinguish the school from others. Growth in non-core areas is noteworthy. The Engineering Department, housed within three recently renovated makerspaces, has expanded since its inception five years ago from a single course to nine, including Intro of Engineering for Women, Aerospace Engineering, and Digital Electronics. All courses in the department offer dual credit through Project Lead the Way (PLTW); Carmel earned PLTW Distinguished School honors in 2018. The introductory gateway course is offered to any interested student. At the onset of hybrid learning, students received take-home kits and CAD software access, enabling them to continue "failing well" with design challenges. Robotics Honors and AP Computer Science are also housed within this department, with Carmel's Robotics team recently earning a world champion title.

Two semesters of Physical Education (PE) are required before graduation; classes are of mixed ages and ability levels. A \$1 million investment in a collegiate-level fitness facility in November 2020 will spark participation in PE electives, such as Speed Development, Yoga, and Sports Medicine. Media courses, available to students of all levels and abilities, include Media Productions (intro and advanced), Journalism, and Yearbook. Students' journey in media culminates in the Carmel Digital Network course. These talented students, integral to the success of many virtual school projects during the pandemic, work not only behind-the-scenes filming various school productions such as commencement, Mass, and the fall play, but also in front of the camera broadcasting weekly live and taped announcements. These broadcasts bring a sought-after connectedness to the community during isolating times.

World Languages offers a study of Latin, Spanish, French, and Mandarin languages as well as an appreciation of the cultures from which these languages originate. Most students invest at least three years in a language. Spanish is the most popular, with courses ranging from CP to dual credit. A course specifically developed to support heritage speakers began in 2019. Two faculty will present to their peers at the spring 2021 Comprehended! national conference celebrating Comprehensible Input, an engaging language acquisition method used by Carmel teachers that highlights proficiency through reading and storytelling.

Fine Arts seeks to provide the best in visual and performing arts for the students. Students find a different type of creative rigor within dedicated arts spaces, including a black box theater, dance studio, photography lab, woodworking shop, Mac lab for graphic design, and a pottery studio with a kiln. Choirs and bands gather in their own large classrooms, flanked with soundproof studios for individual practice. Whatever a student's passion - Music Theory, Studio Art, Guitar, Stagecraft, Marching Band, Advanced Drama, Dance Leadership, or Jazz Ensemble - (s)he can find a progression of coursework from UCP to AP level (60 sections in all) that challenges and inspires.

Finally, the Business Department offers several elective offerings to inspire and prepare budding entrepreneurs and potential businessmen and women. Both the Business INCubator and Accelerator are housed within this department, as is Advice Beyond the Classroom (ABC), a partnership course with local business leaders and alumni. Within Carmel's general course offerings are also ACT and SAT preparation courses, which run each semester.

3. Academic Supports:

Carmel provides a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework of interventions and scaffolded supports for all students. Carmel utilizes the NWEA MAP assessment to help identify students who may need intervention by assessing them during their freshman year in math and reading. Carmel offers tier one interventions, including before/after school teacher support, peer tutoring, and check-in intervention from a student's school counselor, who provides academic and executive functioning support based on need. These interventions have continued uninterrupted through the pandemic, either live or via Zoom.

If a student continues to struggle despite these interventions, the student may be referred by a teacher or their counselor to Carmel's REACH (Recognizing Education And College Hopes) Center, facilitated by three learning resource teachers who provide academic support through direct services with students. The frequency and duration of this support are based on individual needs but typically is once or twice per week for 30 minutes each session. The resource teacher works with the student to provide academic support in their classes as well as instruction on a successful executive functioning system for each student. REACH not only supports students who are struggling and when previous interventions have not been successful but also provides direct support for students who have sustained a concussion or students who have experienced extended absences, possibly due to hospitalization. REACH is considered a tier two intervention and is available for students in need, regardless of any identified disability or medical condition.

For students who need more consistent support and/or may have more significant learning challenges, they may be recommended to take a learning resource seminar class within their schedule. This class is considered Carmel's most intensive tier three academic intervention. It is taught by a learning resource teacher and is taken as an elective within a student's schedule for pass/fail credit. The need for the learning resource class is evaluated every semester. When a student demonstrates academic success and the team feels (s)he can be successful without the class, the resource teachers may encourage the student to take another elective the next semester or following year. The resource class is available at a minimum of one semester or for all four years, depending on a student's individualized academic need. Any students who require special education services are often supported within the learning resource class, focusing on their Individualized Service Plan (ISP) goals.

MAP assessments and student achievement data also help Carmel identify students in need of additional rigor or challenge. In addition to differentiated instruction and assessments for students who demonstrate abilities "above level," additional courses and unique, teacher-guided internships are available to challenge and further pique interest.

To allow room in student schedules for additional support or challenge, Carmel has invested substantially in the expansion of summer coursework offerings. These summer courses allow smaller class environments for students to receive enrichment and additional rigor. Through summer courses, some students may be looking to clear room in schedules for the academic year, while others seek a more intimate setting and support provided by the smaller classes and more individualized attention.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Carmel, one of the six main school values is enthusiasm. Simply put, students learn best and thrive most when they are in a supportive and positive environment. Thus, enthusiastic is a great word to describe the culture that is intentionally shaped through various programs at Carmel. The goal is to engage students in positive, mission-minded activities that support the whole person - academic, social, emotional, and spiritual.

During the school day, crafted programming with a social and/or emotional theme is delivered by the Student Services team, with speakers, targeted education within core classes, and Wellness Days to reinforce all that was taught and learned. A drop-in wellness center is also available for students who need a break from the regiments of the school day. During the pandemic, a virtual drop-in center was created so that students still had this outlet when shut-in. The drop-in center and accompanying web resources were designed to get students to reach out with any issues they were facing so that a trusted Carmel faculty or staff member could provide direction, care, and additional support.

Outside of school hours, students have ample opportunities to participate in activities, athletics, or social events. Student leadership groups promote social events so that students can develop relationships and learn the importance of enthusiasm and culture. Students who engage in these activities tend to develop lasting friendships and carry on the positive elements of the Carmel culture. At times, academic studies can bring with them stress and anxiety. Social outlets such as dances, activity nights, and Connected Learner activities relieve some of the stress students carry around.

Even the physical building is designed to shape a culture of enthusiasm and positivity. Classrooms were recently renovated with new furniture and technology, both of which promote collaboration and communication. Hallways and public spaces are adorned with messages of positivity and mission. Most of the physical investment in school spaces has been designed for student use and intended to spread the enthusiasm that defines the Carmel school culture.

When Carmel pivoted to remote learning in March, Connected Learner activities have provided engagement opportunities for all students in the areas of academic, social/emotional well-being, and college/career readiness topics. These opportunities have been facilitated by many faculty members, including the student services team, school counselors, and Carmel's college counselor, to target specific areas of need for students, often by grade level. The goal of the Connected Learner activities has been to engage students in a meaningful way by providing them information on topics of interest and need as they navigate high school remotely. Topics have included: social/emotional support through resources on a Corsairs Can Calm website, staying connected during remote learning, freshmen mentoring, preparing for finals, and facilitating school counseling curriculum for each grade level by creating videos to inform students on topics specific to their grade level as it relates to the four-year school counseling curriculum.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Expanding on the theme that an effective high school works best with strong ties to parents and community partners, Carmel has increased engagement with these stakeholders incrementally since the last Blue Ribbon award. As a result, students continue to benefit from the experiences and know-how of local business leaders and alumni. Additionally, parents are continually asked to remain involved so that Carmel's culture can pervade outside of the school-day experience. Even teachers gain new experiences through educational partnerships, which shape new programs and techniques and better engage students.

Carmel has partnered with Youth and Family Counseling (YFC) to provide counseling resources to its students and parents. During the pandemic, the social and emotional needs of students have risen dramatically. Academic output is negatively impacted by poor social and/or mental health, so it is imperative to provide outlets for students to stay in sound health.

Carmel has also built a successful Business INCubator program, which partners with local business leaders and entrepreneurs to better develop related skills in interested students. As a result of the INCubator program, two successful student businesses are being run on campus, with oversight from a local business mentor. Business initiatives have also proven great fodder for relationships outside of the Carmel community. Another example is Carmel's Advice Beyond the Classroom (ABC) program, which partners with local businesses and alumni to provide a glimpse into their worlds for any interested students. These partnerships not only develop relationships that mutually benefit each party but also make classroom education come alive by seeing real examples of study and effort in action.

To assist with the spiritual lives of students, Carmel has developed a strong working relationship with a nearby seminary so that students can benefit from their facilities and expertise. Christian service is a vital part of spiritual life at Carmel as well, with students serving local communities, families, and agencies each year. Within the spiritual realm, Carmel strives to serve as a hub for the spiritual development of the surrounding community, with speaker programs and series meant to engage and introduce the school's mission to individuals who may not know much about Carmel.

Carmel even emphasizes relationships with students and families before they attend high school. A new partnership with local elementary schools provides tutoring services, tuition discounts, and opportunities to take Carmel classes for credit while still in middle school.

Aside from specific programs that elicit parent participation, Carmel encourages families to volunteer in many capacities. Carmel has many parents that coach, chaperone student activities, attend speaker series events, help with fundraising, and generally support the operations of the school day. Even coaches at Carmel benefit from relationships with outside organizations. All coaches attend training for coaching with character through an organization called Play Like a Champion Today. Students benefit from this partnership as coaches learn to coach with empathy, to lead with character, and to win or lose with dignity.

Finally, Carmel staff continually seek ways to further distinguish their programs and ensure a thriving marketplace of ideas. Carmel's Democracy School designation is just one example of turning ideas into action and shaping citizens who are knowledgeable and inspired to follow civic duties. Carmel desires to serve as a hub for inspired teaching and has even hosted EdCamp Lake County, an initiative organized and facilitated by Carmel faculty members to share best practices and attract talent.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Carmel is known for its loyal and caring staff; their dedication is due in no small part to how they are valued and supported by school leaders and by each other. Great care is given to include teacher input in academic decisions: department chairs represent each department at monthly meetings, staff surveys are regularly conducted, and the Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) is composed of faculty and staff volunteers across the school, with minutes published internally. Urgent news for families is always preceded by the Principal's email to the staff, indicating professional courtesy and allowing for their preparedness. New teachers engage in a three-year New Teacher program, wherein they are paired with peer mentors. Monthly meetings allow them to embrace the school's mission, to become familiar with daily operations, and to develop their classroom skills. Teacher leaders share their technology skills as dedicated Technology Trainers.

All faculty engage in a three-year professional development rotation; classroom application and personal choice are hallmarks of these leadership and research projects. A recent effort found two math teachers gathering longitudinal data on the accuracy of freshman math placements as related to student matriculation through the department. Each teacher receives \$450 annually for professional development. In addition, Carmel supports several teachers each year with full first master's degree funding.

Monthly in-service days involve large group discussion and question and answer with the Principal, which supports transparency and communication. All in-services include a shared meal to promote community and collegiality, as well. Carmel is committed to providing collaborative time for teachers, with Professional

Learning Teams (PLTs) meeting during shortened days built into the school calendar. The leadership's open-door policy and general trust in the faculty's expertise allow for a fruitful partnership in support of the students. Confidence abounds among the faculty that allows them to try new things - courses, pedagogy, collaborations - without fear of failure.

With simple adjustments to established pathways of support, the leadership's commitment to supporting teachers continued during the pandemic. Quick Connect forms gauge faculty's wellness during remote learning; struggling teachers then receive support from the school leadership team. Given the extraordinary effort required for hybrid instruction, ample time for teacher prep and collaboration is evident in both the weekly hybrid and full eLearning schedules. The schedules themselves were established only after the confirmation of the faculty. Harnessing their problem-solving skills and insights gained through similar classroom struggles, teachers present solutions within a Shared Wisdom activity; this semester's focus areas include fostering remote learner engagement and adjusting assessments for both at-home and in-person learners.

The school's great need for substitute teachers this semester has prompted requests for assistance: this need has been met with ample volunteers from the faculty and administration, as well as from non-academic departments within the school. To further value staff and promote connectedness during this challenging time, a Holiday Cheer activity ran through December. Involving notes of support and thanksgiving, plus some lucky lottery winners, the effort garnered over 850 notes of goodwill among staff.

4. School Leadership:

Carmel Catholic High School operates with a President/Principal model and utilizes a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors are selected by current board members. Each Board Member serves a three-year term. The Board of Directors is further overseen by a Corporate Board of Directors, which are representatives of the school's founding orders - the Order of Carmelites and the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs). The Corporate Board of Directors ensures the school's mission aligns with the charisms of Carmel's two founding orders. The Board of Directors oversees school finances, policies, and strategic planning efforts. The Board of Directors also hires the President.

The President's role focuses on fundraising, financial planning, alumni relations, admissions/enrollment, and strength of mission. It is the President's job to engage the Board of Directors and help set agendas for board meetings. The President also hires and supervises the Principal.

The Principal oversees all academic areas of the school, including teacher supervision, instruction, curriculum, and policies related to student behaviors. The Principal oversees two Assistant Principals, two student Deans, Department Chairs, and a Director of Student Activities.

The Principal also engages with a Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) to allow anonymous feedback from faculty and staff regarding school improvement, policies, and practices. Monthly PAC meetings ensure that all voices are heard, with notes published after each meeting to foster transparency. The goal motivating PAC is to create an environment where everyone can be heard without fear of reproach and where communication and accountability are vital to establishing trust among all those who work at Carmel.

Department chairs are utilized to represent their department, control departmental finances, oversee approved curricula, and engage new ideas to further develop the department and its goals. Department chairs serve a three-year term. Any department member with over three years of experience within the department can volunteer to serve as Chair. The Principal interviews interested candidates every three years and selects the Department Chairs.

Carmel's administrative team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning, Assistant Principal for Student Services, and two Student Deans. The Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning guides the teachers and their professional development. The Assistant Principal of Student Services leads the Student Services team, composed of Counselors, a Psychologist, a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Resource Teachers. The two student Deans ensure that school policies regarding

student attendance and behavior are followed.

Communication and feedback are vital components of the leadership structure. Each person in the leadership hierarchy is evaluated by those above and below the structure. Evaluations are inclusive, and PAC meetings allow feedback to be published and transparent. Trust among the community is upheld through the active devotion to feedback and the importance of communication.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Carmel, rooted in the charisms of its founding orders (Carmelites and BVMs), has a unique devotion to diversity and justice. The Carmelites and BVMs each boast a dedication to serving the poor, disenfranchised, and vulnerable. Each of these Catholic orders has spoken out about recent events detailing racial injustice, and each confirmed notion of white privilege and systemic racial injustice in many long-held institutions, including institutions of education. This conviction on behalf of Carmel's founding orders affirms recent moves to shape Carmel as a diverse school that emphasizes equity and inclusion for all students.

In 2020, Carmel created a scholarship program for first-generation college-bound students. This scholarship will provide a Carmel Catholic education for little to no cost, depending on the financial situation of the families chosen for the scholarship. Students on the scholarship will receive academic and social support to best set them up for success while at Carmel and beyond. Carmel also began construction of a Multicultural Center, which will direct programming to better celebrate the school's diverse environment. This Multicultural Center will open in early January of 2021. Carmel hired a Director for the scholarship program, as well as the Multicultural Center.

International diversity is also an emphasis at Carmel, with a new partnership in place to expand the international student population to over 100 students in four years. Students within this partnership program will receive academic support, housing, student-life programming, and English as a second language support. The idea of this program is to integrate international students fully into the culture of Carmel so that all students can benefit from the life experiences of students from all over the world.

Diversity and inclusion are also an emphasis on the curricular level, with the incorporation of social justice topics included in core classes at every level. Carmel faculty and staff also continue to receive professional development on topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Currently, two faculty members are pursuing degrees in these areas, so that their special interest can further guide school efforts to best celebrate diversity.

When responding to societal issues on race, injustice, and diversity, Carmel is proactive at reaching out to students to give them a voice in a moderated forum. A social justice club continues to serve as a voice for those in need and helps to motivate action to better communities. The Carmel Campus Ministry Department regularly hosts student conversations during turbulent times and offers special prayer intentions and opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe forum.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Since the pandemic completely changed the educational landscape in March of 2020, Carmel has leveraged one technique more than others to keep in tune with students, to engage all community members, and to ensure educational excellence in a time when nothing was normal. This technique can best be described as synchronicity, or live accompaniment with students. When most schools in the nation went remote, students suffered from the lack of daily check-ins, physical attendance, and oversight. Carmel's goal was to keep oversight and attendance intact by making everything synchronous, meaning live time for students and faculty and/or staff to meet for classes, clubs, activities, and athletics.

Synchronicity in education meant that teachers and students met for class every day via Zoom. When a class began, all students were expected to be attending live. Teachers would roll through a quick check-in, with each student stating how they were feeling or talking about an item in his or her room or space. The class would then begin, with teachers randomly calling on students for questions to answer or for feedback. If a student were absent from class, Carmel's Student Services team or Deans would call home that day to ensure that the student was okay. This procedure ensured excellent attendance from a large majority of Carmel students.

Synchronicity in programming outside of daily class attendance meant that student activities and athletics met live on a consistent basis. Each moderator or coach was asked to emphasize synchronous activities so students could get face time with each other and with adults who could identify whether students seemed to be facing any issues.

Synchronicity in socio-emotional support meant that students had outlets throughout the pandemic. As mentioned, Carmel's Student Services team and the student Deans called students every day to make sure they were okay. Carmel's technology team checked in with every family at Carmel to ensure that homes had working WiFi and internet access. Carmel's Campus Ministry team held nightly prayers with students via Instagram. Everyone at Carmel had a major emphasis in mind - getting on the screen with students as much as possible, so proper assessment and supervision could ensure their well-being.

When able, Carmel also allowed students to meet at school to engage in programming or classes. Using outside spaces, teams met to stretch while clubs and activities held socially distanced meetings in person. Carmel even had a dedicated team of staff members completing "home checks" when students were no longer on the radar or visible in classes. Since the 2020-2021 school year began, the theme of synchronicity continued, with classes and activities held in person so that students had the benefit of relationships to help them cope with issues arising from the pandemic and isolation.

Above all, Carmel's dedication to synchronous experiences kept relationships intact at a time when most were void of them. Carmel was truly an accompaniment to students' journeys through the pandemic. Carmel was there, via Zoom or in-person, to keep up with students and to continue to care for them, to challenge them, and to make things seem as normal as possible.

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? \$14325
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$6192

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 17%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 35%

PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)¹. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup² in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments³).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

¹ Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

² Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

³ Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)