

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

Official School Name Blessed Sacrament Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2407 Dixie Highway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Fort Mitchell State KY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 41017-2994

County Kenton

Telephone (859) 331-3062 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://bssky.org/ E-mail dsteffen@bssky.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* Mrs. Kendra McGuire E-mail kmcguire@covdio.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Covington Tel. (859) 392-1500

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Tracie Stacy
(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	22	21	43
1	26	39	65
2	30	29	59
3	31	24	55
4	34	27	61
5	30	21	51
6	33	24	57
7	21	30	51
8	29	22	51
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	256	237	493

*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):
- 0.5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.2 % Asian
 - 0.5 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96.5 % White
 - 1.3 % 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 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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	525
(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):

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %

Total number students who qualify: 22

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %

17 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>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>33</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	26
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.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 19:1

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	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

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

The mission of Blessed Sacrament School is to spiritually, academically, and personally develop active Catholics using the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ.

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.

We opened as usual. Some grade-levels are utilizing common spaces (cafeteria, meeting rooms) as classrooms, as they are larger than the classrooms and allow for additional spacing. In November, the Kentucky governor’s executive order halted in-person instruction and forced a transition back to distance learning until January. Since January, we have been back to full-time, in-person instruction without interruption.

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

Our Blessed Sacrament School community consists of our staff, a student body consisting of approximately 500 learners from kindergarten through 8th grade, parents and guardians, alumni, Parish staff, and Parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church. Our institution is one rich in history, celebrating our Centennial Anniversary in 2020 alongside the Church. Many students are the third or fourth generations of their family to walk the halls of Blessed Sacrament School, and “Eagle Pride” runs deep. Our community is not limited to legacies however, as we have students traveling from several different counties to attend our school. We have a diverse, supportive, and uplifting community of which each person plays an integral role in the success of our organization. With every triumph or hard time, these individuals show up to support one another spiritually, financially, and emotionally. The legacy of support is strong and, over the last 100 years, has helped shape the institution into what it is today.

Over the years, administrators and staff have worked tirelessly to create initiatives to help meet all learners at their level. We have created a number of programs to meet the unique needs of each student and support them with a more individualized approach.

The “Response to Intervention” (RTI) program helps teachers design curriculum centered around students’ specific-learning needs. The students’ knowledge is pre-assessed and small groups are created for a portion of the day. These groups are fluid and change based on data pertaining to the particular essential skill taught in the classroom. The data used for RTI groups also provides teachers with the information needed to tier instruction in the classroom during whole-group instruction.

Other assets available at Blessed Sacrament School include a targeted approach for the individual student thorough remediation or acceleration with our specialist teachers. These teachers provide services at both ends of the learning spectrum; such as personalized interventions for individuals needing tutoring for dyslexia all the way to grade-level acceleration for students whom qualify. In addition to the personal approach to learning, we have also created a STREAM (science, technology, reading, engineering, art, and math) curriculum unique to our school. All students in grades K-8 participate in this enrichment class weekly. We also offer an accelerated program called EXPLORE to qualifying students in grades 5 - 8. The EXPLORE program was developed to provide extension opportunities for high-achieving learners. Students who qualify to participate in this program receive enrichment-based instruction in the areas of critical thinking, creativity, research, problem solving, and technology. The goal is for these students to be prepared to extend their learning in challenging subject matters and rigorous courses as they move through elementary, middle, and high school. For students in 6th through 8th grades, we also offer sections of math and language arts taught at an advanced level and an accelerated pace. Qualifying 8th graders have the opportunity to take an advanced math course at the local high schools during the school day for high school credit.

When the necessary and abrupt transition into virtual teaching and learning happened in March of 2020, our community members stepped up to make the process as smooth as possible. Teachers from kindergarten to 8th grade suddenly adapted by transitioning their classrooms to digital platforms. Because in-person learning was suspended and our building was closed, our students began learning through Zoom classes, Facebook groups, Google Classroom, and recorded videos in order to provide in-home access to high-quality curriculum during quarantine. Over the summer, teachers continued to educate themselves on the capabilities of Google and Google Classroom; each one received basic certification from Google, and many went on to receive advanced certification. The administration worked endlessly over the summer to create comprehensive reopening plans which prepared the community for a variety of learning possibilities including in-person, hybrid, and full virtual models. The administration also created extensive protocols including spacing and mask requirements, increased hygiene measures such as installing touchless faucets, purchasing hospital-grade cleaning equipment and solution, and placing air purifiers in classrooms. Our school was successfully able to hold classes in-person with no sign of spread of Covid-19 in our building for approximately 15 weeks before complying with Governor Beshear's executive order shutting down private and public Kentucky schools from November to January. During our in class experience at the beginning of this academic year, we were able to prepare our students for elements of virtual learning. This allowed us to

transition seamlessly to virtual learning as mandated, and then back into the building in January, where we have been ever since without disruption.

Blessed Sacrament School is a three-time recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award (1994, 2007, and 2015). Understanding what it takes to earn this honor, we consistently strive to revamp and innovate our curriculum to keep our school competitive and our students thriving as 21st century learners. Various initiatives, such as our intervention and enrichment programs, have been influenced by the Blue Ribbon recognition, as we strive to uphold that level of excellence. Blue Ribbon awards bring pride to our community because they are earned as a result of the culmination of the efforts of all stakeholders. Our school culture is one of pride and collaboration, and community members continue to seek out our school for a premier education based on the three-time recognition of this prestigious award. Our goal is to continue to help our students grow spiritually, academically, and socially by elevating ourselves under the status of Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Blessed Sacrament School’s curriculum has been fine-tuned over our 100-year history to ensure that our students continue to have the knowledge and skills they need to successfully transition into the next phases of their lives. Beginning with a framework from our Diocese and along with state standards, our specific curriculum was most recently updated and customized following discussions with our local high schools. After examining their curriculum and expectations for freshman students, we worked backwards to ensure that our curriculum aligned with what the high schools expected from freshman in their building. Starting with 8th grade moving downwards through kindergarten, our curriculum is laid out sequentially so, that, from day one, students are on a linear path towards attainment of the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in high school and beyond. We call these standards our “essential skills,” and they are laid out in a progressive fashion from kindergarten through 8th grade.

Teachers at Blessed Sacrament are encouraged to embrace creativity when finding instructional methods that work for all of their students in their subject area. For example, our math department has found great success with a flipped-classroom model in the junior high. In science, teachers are provided with any necessary resources to ensure that concepts and labs are brought to life for students. In social studies, re-enactors and simulations are frequently utilized to edify students about the past. In language, students are met at their ability levels and challenged individually to become more effective readers and writers. In religion, a blend of instruction, reflection, and introspection is employed to provide a variety of ways to interact and connect with faith-based content. In all grade-levels, teachers utilize a blend of formative and summative assessments to gauge student understanding to modify lessons and employ enrichment and remediation as needed. Exit slips, white boards, Google Forms, thumbs up/down, stand up/sit down, interactive quiz games, electronic instructional supports like MobyMax, four corners, and other formative assessment strategies are used in all grade-levels to monitor understanding and direct instruction in real time for both whole group and individual students. Summative assessments such as quizzes, tests, writing, electronic and paper projects, posters, game boards, etc. are used in all grade-levels as well to ensure that knowledge is being retained and solidified. These summative assessments also are used to inform instruction. If most students under-perform on a specific quiz or test, we view that as an opportunity for teachers to review, improve, and re-teach to ensure students have the level of understanding needed before moving on. As our standards are deemed “essential” to us, they must be understood by all students. The essential skills make up our guaranteed curriculum. Additionally, all of our students take the MAP test (measure of academic progress) three times a year. This test provides invaluable data, broken down by standard, that teachers use to inform instruction.

Tiered and differentiated lessons are everyday practice at Blessed Sacrament School. In grades 6-8, students are ability grouped for math and language arts to ensure that they receive appropriate and challenging instruction. In our elementary grades, students are tiered into small groups when necessary for math and language. In all grades, teachers use tiered activities such as choosing novels on the same topic but with different reading levels, enhancing the complexity and depth of math problems and concepts, implementing choice boards but ensuring higher-level students have more challenging tasks, tiered questions, and more. Beginning in fifth grade, students are also evaluated for admission to our EXPLORE program. Program acceptance is determined using a combination of three metrics; MAP scores, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, and the CogAT. EXPLORE is our version of a formal gifted program. The EXPLORE groups in grades 5 – 8 meet with our EXPLORE teacher (a certified gifted intervention specialist) twice a week. These groups dive deeper into classroom content, but also utilize skills such as creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration to a deeper degree with peers of similar ability.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing up through 3rd grade, Blessed Sacrament employs a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to remediate and/or expand on student knowledge and understanding of each skill as needed. Kindergarten classes have a full-time instructional aide that is utilized to monitor individual understanding of each skill, provide remediation and/or enrichment as necessary, and support the teaching and learning of the class as a whole. Grades 1, 2, and 3 each have one instructional aide shared between the three homerooms. Together, this team of three instructional aides moves from grade three to grade two to

grade one, facilitating the RTI program. These instructional aides teach lessons to the homerooms that reinforce the skills students have been working on in their classes. This allows the homeroom teachers, who monitor student progress on each specific skill, to pull small groups of students for remediation or enrichment as needed. This process happens every Monday through Thursday for 35 minutes in each grade-level. Small groups are fluid and change every few weeks based on progress and new skills introduced.

This year, COVID-19 has obviously provided challenges for our parochial school. With much pre-planning and preparation, we were able to successfully complete a full trimester of in-person instruction to start the 2020 – 2021 school year. Around Thanksgiving, our school was mandated to transition into NTI (“non-traditional-instruction” or distance learning) by the state. Because of our information gathering after the spring NTI session and our countless hours of planning over the summer, Blessed Sacrament School was prepared for this change. Instruction had been heavily adapted to accommodate students and families at home. Our youngest learners (kindergarten & 1st grade) were live with their teacher two days a week and provided with instructional materials and videos on the other three days. Our 2nd grade students were live three days a week and provided instructional materials and videos on the other two days. Our students in grades 3 – 8 were live every day with their teachers, often completing their work electronically through resources like Google Classroom. In all grades, teachers were available every day for help and support. We truly feel that this model was, and still is if ever needed again, both developmentally appropriate and sufficient to ensure student understanding of our essential skills and curriculum. Additionally, our specialist teachers (PE, art, music, & STREAM) posted weekly lessons to a specialist-specific website and are also assigned to support grade-level core instruction during the NTI period. Our reading specialist, math specialist, intervention specialist, and counselor were also supporting students who struggle by assisting with whole-class instruction or scheduling individual sessions with at-risk students as needed both virtually and in-building.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As a school, we are proud to offer a full complement of “specials” classes for our students. These courses not only provide students an opportunity to interact with a variety of disciplines, but they also work to integrate and reinforce our curriculum and essential skills within their content areas.

Our music program begins in kindergarten and continues through 8th grade. Every homeroom class has music once a week. The majority of music classes focus on students interacting with hands-on instruments. This allows them to learn how to read and play music and enjoy getting to know a variety of instruments from percussion to keyboards. Our music program also incorporates classical composers throughout the various historical time periods which aligns with our social studies curriculum. Students also have a chance to sing, act, and perform at a variety of school musical events such as our annual Christmas concert.

Our art program formally begins in 1st grade and goes through 8th grade. In first and second grade, we have a dedicated art teacher who specializes in elementary art education. Grades 1 – 2 focus on the basics of colors and various mediums while also emulating popular artists from history. In grades 3 – 8, we have another certified art teacher. Art in grades 3 – 8 is closely aligned with each grade's social studies curriculum, with students creating cave paintings when they are learning about ancient history, basket weaving when learning about Native Americans, and more!

Our physical education (PE) program begins in kindergarten and continues through 8th grade. Students in kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade all participate in PE twice a week. Students in grades 3 – 8 attend PE once a week. In the elementary grades, students focus on the development of motor skills. In the middle

grades, students focus on a variety of sports and how to play them. In the upper grades, students focus on physical fitness, while still engaging in a variety of sports and activities. Elements of physiology are incorporated into our PE curriculum across the board.

Blessed Sacrament's foreign language program is Spanish. We begin formal Spanish instruction in the 2nd grade when students have Spanish once a week. Students continue with Spanish instruction once a week in 3rd grade. In grades 4 –5, students attend Spanish class twice a week. In grades 6 – 8, students have Spanish class three days a week. One major benefit of our program is that we have two Spanish teachers. Our primary Spanish teacher teaches grades 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8. She is a native of Mexico, with a very authentic accent and first-hand experience of the culture which she shares with students. Our second teacher, who teaches Spanish to grades 5 and 6, is a native of Mississippi, and speaks Spanish with a very different inflection. Having two teachers provides the students with exposure to a variety of Spanish speakers.

New to our school this year is our STREAM program. STREAM stands for science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and math. STREAM can be thought of as an enriched STEM curriculum. Our STREAM program was made possible by a generous alumnus who made a contribution to allow us to remodel our media center into a STREAM lab. Our STREAM curriculum is still being developed during its first year, but some examples of the activities that students engage in are; virtual field trips with VR goggles, coding, robotics, computing, 3D printing, conservation and recycling projects, engineering bridges and structures, and more. This curriculum is aimed at inspiring a love for creativity and outside-the-box thinking and promoting more students to use these skills long-term in a professional setting.

3. Academic Supports:

Classroom teachers regularly differentiate and tier instruction to meet the needs of their students. Teachers use pre-assessments and formative assessments (i.e, exit slips, Google Forms, quick-check strategies, quizzes, etc.) to gauge understanding, and they utilize that information to determine where additional instruction, small group intervention, or adjusted strategies may be needed. They utilize collaboration, technology, hands-on learning, and a variety of other activities to ensure all learning styles are addressed, and they provide opportunities for remediation and enrichment throughout curriculum units.

Students with gaps in achievement receive a variety of targeted interventions to address their needs. Grades K-3 use Response to Intervention (RTI) to regularly provide small group intervention on math and reading skills. Students are identified based on MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) scores or curriculum-based assessments. Tier one interventions are implemented by teachers using tiering and differentiation in the classroom setting. Tier two interventions are provided by classroom teachers working with small groups; tier three interventions are most often provided by the Math Specialist, Reading Specialist, or Academic Support Specialist on a more individual basis. Students in grades 4-8 who are performing below grade level receive small group or individual intervention from the Math, Reading, and Academic Support Specialists during scheduled intervention times or class periods. Students in grades 6 – 8 are also grouped for math and language classes to ensure that they can be met at their level through differentiation and tiering. In 8th grade, advanced math students have an opportunity to test into a high school math class that is offered at our local high schools. They can earn high school credit while still in the 8th grade.

As a school, student learning is our primary objective. If a group does not grasp a concept or skill, we view that as an opportunity to go back and re-teach to ensure that students have what they need before moving on. Some students need some additional support to ensure they get what they need, and we are happy to accommodate them through our support services. Students with diagnosed learning disabilities or cognitive differences are given an Alternative Learning Plan (ALP) to provide classroom and testing accommodations. Alternative Learning Plans are handled in our

school in the same manner as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are in public schools. Accommodations include, but are not limited to: reduced written work, use of assistive technology, extended time for assignments/reduced requirements, chunking/scaffolding, extended time for testing, limited answer choices on tests, and testing with a resource teacher or aide. These students also have scheduled times with the Academic Support Specialist, Math Specialist, and Reading Specialist to provide targeted interventions and/or classroom support as needed.

Students who perform above grade level may be identified as academically talented or gifted and will participate in the EXPLORE program. The EXPLORE program, led by the Enrichment Specialist, provides extension and enrichment opportunities and experiences beyond the classroom content. The program focuses on higher-level skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, questioning, and more. EXPLORE groups meet twice a week with the program coordinator, who is also a gifted intervention specialist, to ensure they have an opportunity to continue to extend their knowledge and utilize their abilities.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

The positive environment of Blessed Sacrament School starts at the top with kind, consistent, and creative leadership. It then trickles down to our students through our understanding, capable teaching staff. The administration supports teachers through an open door, proactive policy, where teachers feel comfortable discussing concerns and ideas. Weekly prayer meetings, faculty meetings/events (virtual, if necessary), advisory meetings, and retreats support and energize staff. Students take notice of the positivity and community in the staff. Teachers support each other through Professional Learning Communities and during mutual planning times. They create thought-filled lessons which engage students and encourage success for all learners with intentional, differentiated instruction. To prepare for this year's NTI, teachers worked extra hours to gather new technology tools from webinars and from each other. During NTI, the specialists, support staff and instructional aides assist teachers in meeting student's needs and providing in-person support services.

Extracurricular activities including sports, arts, service, academic teams, robotics, choir, and student council promote relationships, leadership opportunities, and positive environments for growth. Students meet and work with different teachers during these events, providing valued connections. Our service clubs, such as the female-youth group, Challenge, and our student council, encourage gratitude and sharing with others; diaper, book, and food drives happen regularly which promote kindness throughout our school and community.

Our cross grade-level Buddies Program builds lasting friendships at BSS with the sixth through eighth graders being matched with primary students for a variety of activities throughout the year. Together, they attend church, encourage reading, and make crafts for holidays. Even during NTI, notes and cards were encouraged especially during sacramental events and graduation.

School themes are implemented yearly at BSS and encourage community spirit and growth. Each student's unique gifts were acknowledged and celebrated last year with our theme "Shaped by God," and, this year, put into action with our theme "Bloom where you are Planted." The arts, along with our gifted programs and support services, embrace students' strengths and weakness so that all can shine in our building. Teachers work to bring the best out of all students often by providing small group opportunities where students can work together. Students learn academics but also life skills by sharing ideas, problem solving, resolving conflicts, and listening and trying to understand other points of view. We celebrate the whole child and work to foster growth as a community.

Special needs of students are communicated with staff as appropriate so all staff members can support students who are struggling academically, socially, or emotionally. Through the years, teachers have benefited from in-services, such as ADHD, anxiety, giftedness, and dyslexia to increase the understanding some of the challenges our students face at BSS.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As a school, we pride ourselves on the open communication with and involvement of our community. Administrators communicate to all families weekly through our school newsletter. This newsletter contains relevant information for all families including: a weekly calendar, useful links, lunch menu, updates from the administration, reminders, procedural changes, student council updates, student recognition, flyers for ongoing initiatives, sports sign-up information, and more. Additionally, for more important and time-sensitive matters, the administration will communicate with all families directly through e-mail via our school management system. Each grade-level has a newsletter which they send out to families weekly. It contains announcements, grade-level specific calendars, and assignments for the week. Most of our grade-levels also have positive behavior systems in place that encourage and require frequent two-way communication between parents and teachers.

We have two main parent organizations which work collaboratively with our school to keep the community engaged, raise funds, and provide another bridge between the school and community. We call these groups our Parents' Club and our Development Committee. The Development Committee spends the majority of their time and effort promoting the school, increasing enrollment, and raising funds for building upgrades, specialist staff, and technology. The Parent's Club spends their time hosting more social events for both parents and students. The social events for parents are often fundraisers (i.e. spirit night at a restaurant, spirit wear sales, gift card program, Food Truck Night, etc.). The events for students are simply fun activities that encourage students to love their school (i.e. Santa Shop, Halloween "parties", field day, mother/son and father/daughter dances, etc.). Our school would simply not be the same without these organizations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school created a YouTube channel to be able to continue some of the routine things we do as a school such as; birthdays, trivia questions, fun facts, and announcements. We also utilized this medium to create and share videos highlighting our graduating 8th graders as the end of their school year was largely disrupted. For our scholarship presentation ceremonies and our 8th grade "awards banquet," we held Zoom meetings to be able to engage with families face-to-face. For graduation, we had each graduate sign up for individual time slots to walk down the aisle one at a time so they could each have their moment on film and receive their diploma. During this school year's pandemic-related building closure, the office staff has maintained consistent office hours so that we are easily accessible by parents should they need us for any reason. The school has provided any family in need with a tablet/tablets so that each student has a means of accessing their virtual classes each day.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

A supportive and caring school culture is such an essential element of our school. One frequent example of this is when parents volunteer to provide surprise lunches and coffee for teachers to show their support and appreciation. Internally, our school has developed a designated Spirit Committee whose sole purpose is to maintain high levels of teacher morale. It has been more important this year than ever before to create an environment where teachers feel supported and valued, especially in light of the many new and different responsibilities they have been tasked to take on each day. This fall semester, small groups of teachers were given a surprise coffee break during their day. This gave them a chance to step away from their classroom, take their mind off of work, and socialize with other teachers whom they do not normally get to interact with on a day-to-day basis because of COVID guidelines and precautions that are in place.

Our school makes it a priority to ensure teachers feel like they are part of a family. Our staff retreat is one of the most cherished events we do together. This fall, we took our staff retreat to an outdoor getaway and were able to connect with co-workers on a level beyond daily workplace conversation. This opportunity to bond as a school community allowed us to appreciate our relationship with one another and value our role as educators at Blessed Sacrament.

During the transition to mandated-distance learning in the fall, our Specialist teachers helped classroom teachers by acting as grade-level liaisons. They met with small groups or assisted in the development of curriculum during that non-traditional instructional period. Having the co-teacher atmosphere during virtual learning made the transition less stressful for both teachers and students since it allowed for more collaborative efforts as our school navigated from in-person instruction to a digital classroom environment. It also provided students with a better student-teacher ratio and allowed for more individualized attention.

From a professional development standpoint, our school works in Professional Learning Communities both vertically and horizontally. Teachers meet with groups of same-subject teachers from all grade-levels part of the time and meet with their grade-level teams the other part of the time. These PLC groups help provide support in each curriculum area and allow for collaboration outside of grade-level groupings to ensure curriculum alignment. In addition to our PLC groupings, outside speakers are brought in as needed to educate our staff on a variety of topics from medical conditions or situations of students to new curriculum supplements or training on a new textbook series.

Once a month, at the start of each faculty meeting, our administration conducts "Staff Shout-Outs" where

they recognize teachers for their hard work and dedication. These “Staff Shout-Outs” are also opened up to other staff members to recognize one another for their support throughout the school day and beyond the classroom. These minor recognitions go a long way in making teachers feel valued for their hard work and dedication to their vocation as educators.

4. School Leadership:

At Blessed Sacrament, the Pastor (head Parish priest) oversees both the school and Parish. Beneath the Pastor, the school principal oversees the day-to-day operations of the school with support from an assistant principal. The philosophy of the administration of our school is that all students can and should be given an equal opportunity to learn in the most caring and supportive environment that we can offer. Every facet of the school is rooted in Catholic tradition and our school mission is to “spiritually, academically, and socially develop active Catholics using the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ.” We believe that open communication between all stakeholders is one of the most important elements of a high-quality school experience. When parents, teachers, staff, and students are all on the same page pulling in the same direction, there is no limit to the level at which our students can achieve.

The role of the principal is to oversee every aspect of the school operation. This includes but is not limited to; budget, staffing, facilities, classes, curriculum, operations, discipline, training, professional development, observing, mentoring, policies, procedures, fundraising, maintaining staff morale, establishing building culture, meeting with stakeholders and community members, and keeping the community informed, among others. The role of the assistant principal is to assist with all of the aforementioned tasks as designated by the principal. Additionally, the assistant principal focuses more heavily on staff development, curriculum, discipline, and building culture.

Keeping students at the center of everything we do is the guiding philosophy for our administration, teachers, and staff. Class sizes, for example, are capped in every grade to ensure that the student-teacher ratio is appropriate and ideal for learning. Instructional aides are provided in every kindergarten class and in first, second, and third grades. Student schedules are designed with student learning in mind. They allow for both Response to Intervention (RTI – a targeted intervention program) in younger grades and leveled-courses in upper grades. We ensure that we take time to recognize the positive achievements of students with our “Celebrate Success” program. We encourage and recognize thoughtful student behavior daily, and, on Thoughtful Thursdays, we read acts of Christian kindness over the announcements. Christ-like behavior is more formally recognized every trimester through the presentations of our Christian Student Awards.

COVID-19 has presented a multitude of challenges. The most essential elements of re-opening school and navigating virtual learning are extensive planning and communication with the school community. The role of the administration has shifted slightly and primarily consists of garnering stakeholder feedback, developing and implementing plans, making necessary adjustments, and supporting teachers and students in any way possible. In all, the strength and dedication of our community to our school has helped us persevere through this pandemic.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The first and most central way that we celebrate the diversity in our building is by creating and fostering a culture of inclusion and understanding. Regardless of background, race, circumstance, socioeconomic status, etc., students in our building are peers, teammates, and equal members of our community. Staff members work to ensure that all students are equally cared for, celebrated, and loved. Children learn best when their basic safety and comfort needs are being met, and we ensure to address them in everything we do.

As a high-quality Catholic school, prospective families often ask “What if our family is not Catholic?” Our response is that non-Catholic students enrich our school and culture as much as Catholic students do. While students from other religious backgrounds may not be able to fully

participate in all of the Catholic sacraments, they are included in all classes and ceremonies in some capacity to ensure that they know they are as much a part of our community as anyone else.

Our social studies curriculum provides great avenues for addressing diverse cultures. For example, our 5th and 6th grade students study ancient civilizations and history. This includes an in-depth look at Judaism and how it provided a foundation that would later develop into Christianity. During this unit of study, a Rabbi visits our students to teach them more about Jewish traditions and history and recreates a Seder Meal with them. In 4th grade, students learn about Ellis Island in both social studies and language arts, and they trace their cultural roots. They are able to learn about the diverse cultures that have shaped both their families and their classmates through this study.

Another example of inclusion and acceptance is Everybody Counts. This longstanding program at Blessed Sacrament has each grade-level focus on one particular common disability to learn more about it and the challenges it presents for those individuals affected. Some of the conditions that our students learn about are diabetes, autism, cancer, blindness, etc. Not only do students learn about the condition, but they also participate in simulations to be able to appreciate what these individuals are going through. The program also includes reflection and connection activities that help our students connect these activities to their daily lives. Some of our students even educate their peers if they have a particular disability and are comfortable sharing their experiences.

In addition to our other academic support teachers, our school is blessed to have a full-time counselor. The counselor is state-certified and works with whole group, small group, and individuals as needed. The primary role of the counselor is to ensure that students are both mentally and emotionally healthy. In addition, the counselor teaches our students the skills of friendship and inclusion by facilitating group lessons and anti-bullying seminars in all grade-levels. These lessons are developmentally appropriate for each age group and designed to provide necessary skills and direction to students on social topics in a timely manner.

Diversity is welcomed and celebrated at Blessed Sacrament. Every individual contributes something to our community, and we wouldn't be the same without each and every one of them!

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been the most instrumental to Blessed Sacrament's continued ability to successfully educate and support students since school closures began in March of 2020 is building strong staff culture and buy-in. Asking teachers, especially those who were uncomfortable with technology, to completely reimagine their job and how they do things overnight was not a small order. It required communication, flexibility, training, buy-in, and, most of all, love for students. If our staff were not as invested in our students, school community, and in one another, the transition would not have been nearly as successful. Some examples of this dedication to our students' learning are our specialist teachers (PE, art, music, etc.). These individuals served as co-teachers during live distance-learning classes in addition to posting their own lessons. This type of collaboration has been so powerful for our culture and for student learning.

Beginning day one of the current school administration's tenure, a very strong emphasis was placed on building a positive culture among staff. When individuals feel invested, valued, and cared for in their work place, they are simply more likely to do what it takes for the benefit of students and one another. As an added bonus, these individuals are happier putting in the work because they know their peers are putting in the same effort and supporting one another along the way. Staff members also know that if they need additional support, all they need to do is ask. It is these practices that reaffirm and solidify the buy-in of staff members.

Finding a balance between very high expectations and strong job satisfaction is not easy. The number one contributing factor to a supportive and positive building culture is openness. If our administration has a new initiative, they are going to be open about it and the logic behind it and are going to garner feedback on the process of implementation and adjust as needed. If a teacher has a new way to teach a concept, they know they can be open with the administration and with their partner teachers about their desire to do things differently. If any staff member has a question or piece of feedback, it is not only heard but welcomed. Many minds are better than few and when those various parties are working together to pull in the same direction, progression towards high-levels of successful teaching and learning will follow.

At Blessed Sacrament, we say often that our peers are more like family than co-workers. This sentiment is a glimpse of the powerful culture that we have built and will continue to foster, ultimately for the benefit of students.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

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

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$6595
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1500

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? 3%

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)