

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

Official School Name St. Robert Bellarmine School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11900 Pacific Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Omaha State NE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 68154-3471

County Douglas

Telephone (402) 334-1929 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.stroberts.com/school E-mail jreinhart@stroberts.com

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. Vickie Kauffold E-mail vkkauffold@archomaha.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools Tel. (402) 557-5600

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. Ann Zemann
(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	31	24	55
K	33	23	56
1	37	22	59
2	25	25	50
3	21	27	48
4	28	29	57
5	25	35	60
6	44	20	64
7	21	30	51
8	32	29	61
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	297	264	561

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.7 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 2 % 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: 4%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	561
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 33

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %

50 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. 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>2</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</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: 2

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.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
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 30:1

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%	96%	96%	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.

Saint Robert Bellarmine Catholic School empowers students to be united by the values of Living Faith, Practicing Service, Achieving Excellence, Inspiring Leadership, and Promoting Collaboration.

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.

Since August 2020 to the present, St. Robert Bellarmine School has been operating with 100% in person education. Kindergarten through grade four are self-contained classrooms. Grades five and six and the middle school, grades seven and eight, are departmentalized. The students in grades five through eight switch classes for all subjects, similar to years prior. Students’ seating assignments are the same in all classes for contact tracing purposes.

All classes, kindergarten through grade eight, attend specialty classes in the specific specialty teacher’s classroom.

St. Robert Bellarmine School has COVID protocols in place such as a temperature checks, hand sanitizing, a mask mandate, one-way traffic in all hallways and staircases, desk shields on all desks and tables spaced out per COVID-19 directives, and disinfecting all surfaces every 40 minutes in all areas that students occupy.

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

St. Robert Bellarmine School is a Catholic school located in Omaha, Nebraska, a large metropolitan city of approximately 835,000 people. The school is comprised of a student body numbering 561 in preschool through grade eight. In 1966, St. Robert Bellarmine Parish was built in the western-most part of the city surrounded by open land. Through the vision and leadership of the founding pastor, Father Eugene Kerwin, it was determined that a school should be the focus of the community. The entire parish community supported this vision and thus built the school. In 1979, the parish community rallied again and built a parish church.

St. Robert Bellarmine School is founded on the principle that all students are leaders of all to Christ who are learning today and leading tomorrow. The mission of the school is dedicated to educating students in a Catholic, Christ-centered environment. The community is united by the core values of living faith, practicing service, achieving excellence, inspiring leadership, and promoting collaboration. The students and families actively fulfill this mission by creating the optimal atmosphere for learning to be achieved. The educators successfully teach to the whole person and integrate the Catholic faith into classroom instruction and learning. The students are empowered to achieve excellence and become leaders of all to Christ as they live meaningful lives of service inspired by the teachings of Jesus.

The socioeconomic dynamics of St. Robert Bellarmine School's population has grown more diverse over the years. Omaha expansion has moved westward, with the development more Catholic schools, the enrollment at St. Robert Bellarmine School has remained stable. This is due to the strong tradition of excellence in education and community support. Due to the excellence that St. Robert Bellarmine maintains, alumni return so that their children can be educated and inspired by the learning community they once treasured.

St. Robert Bellarmine School educators make every effort to continually meet all learners' educational needs, both academically and spiritually. The staff implements programs and learning activities that create differentiated classrooms and learning experiences for all students, so vital to the diversity of St. Robert Bellarmine School, which welcomes all students regardless of their academic needs. Students exceed the high expectations set by the teachers and exhibit growth both academically and personally. By instilling these traits, St. Robert Bellarmine School shapes independent, life-long learners.

Through the differentiated curriculum, the support of the teachers, and parents, and the determination of the students, St. Robert Bellarmine School has performed extremely well on high school placement tests. Each year, the eighth grade class of St. Robert Bellarmine School has been the recipient of many high school scholarships. In fact, 32% of the graduating class of 2020 received high school scholarships. This achievement is a testament to the hard work of the entire learning community.

St. Robert Bellarmine School has implemented a wide range of activities to encourage and challenge students to develop into well-rounded individuals. Academically, the students participate in Mathcounts competitions and have successfully placed in top positions during each contest. The students have actively participated in Robotics, Speech, Geography, History and Science competitions and have been equally rewarded for their efforts.

In conjunction with academic awards, St. Robert Bellarmine students are actively involved in the community, collecting funds for Essential Pregnancy Service and Warm and Woolly clothing for the local shelters.

The Student Ambassador program allows eighth-grade student leaders to interact with the community's senior citizens, engaging in conversations about past and current events, and the impact of those events on society. It allows all participants involved to develop and build lasting relationships.

With the involvement of the parents, teachers, and parishioners, students can attain their full potential. As students continue on with their future, they will continue to be excellent leaders of all to Christ as they are learning today and leading tomorrow.

On Friday, March 13, 2020, the traditional way of educating students greatly changed. On this day the St. Robert Bellarmine community came together for the safety of the students and teachers. Teachers quickly switched from in-person learning to teaching via Zoom. The superbly talented teachers immediately communicated the visions of their learning plans with the parents and students and remote learning was implemented by Monday morning successfully. The impact of COVID-19 showed the resilience of the St. Robert community. Educators, parents and students worked together with one goal in mind: to educate students effectively while maintaining a healthy self.

Receiving the National Blue Ribbon award in 2015 was validation for the work the staff, students and parents do every day. As educators, the students are held to a high standard, however; the staff holds themselves to an even higher standard. With the award comes responsibility. The staff continues to review Best Practices, participate in professional development and implement new practices in curriculum and instruction.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

The curriculum standards used at St. Robert Bellarmine School are prescribed from the Archdiocese of Omaha. This curriculum serves as an outline for standards that must be met at each grade level. The teachers at St. Robert Bellarmine School are given the autonomy to develop a curriculum, which best meets, the needs of students while adhering to the archdiocesan standards. Through this unique process of writing curriculum worksheets and curriculum maps, a scope and sequences for the curriculum taught is organized by grade level and curricular area. These curriculum tools are revised yearly. In order to reach all learners and develop a curriculum to meet the needs of each students, the subjects of reading, language arts and math are grouped by ability.

The reading/language arts curriculum at St. Robert Bellarmine School is not designed from any one model. Just as students are diverse so is the curriculum. The reading/language arts curriculum draws from areas including whole language, phonics and authentic literature. In addition to phonemic awareness, the reading/language arts program in the primary grades also integrates fluency practices into the program. The Wilson Reading system is an intensive Tier 3 program is used with students who require more intensive structured literacy instruction due to the language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia. In the intermediate and middle school grades, guided reading and authentic literature are implemented to create the desire and love for reading while calibrating the students' basic skills.

The mathematics curriculum is based on the philosophy that all students can advance higher mathematics skills despite national trend data. The utilization of STAR Math testing given three times a year, in conjunction with chapter tests, allows teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and adapt the curriculum to meet their specific needs. Students also engage in small group discussions and problem solving skills to engage and develop higher level thinking skills.

Students in all grades experience hands on learning which makes science come alive and provides real world experiences over a variety of topics. The high school replicated science lab is utilized by students in grades four through eight. The students are assessed on their knowledge of science concepts through chapter/unit tests and performance assessments. This lab is equipped with the state of the art technology and the resources to provide the students to investigate a variety of scientific topics.

The goal of the social studies curriculum is to prepare students to participate actively as responsible citizens of a democratic society in an independent world. Students experience these social topics through discussions and experiences. Students in grade eight participated in a yearly history fair that explores a multitude of topics. Some of these students will advance to state and national competitions. Similarly, students in grades six through eight participate in a geography bee that also involves state and national competitions. The curriculum used emphasizes both history and geography and how the two influence all lives today.

Since the fall of 2010, TerraNova3 standardized test has been the national test administered to the St. Robert Bellarmine students in grades three through eight. In the fall of 2020, the SRB community began utilizing the STAR Math and Reading tests. The STAR testing is given three times a year that allows the teachers to continually analyze students' progress in order to adjust the rigors of the curriculum.

In grades seven and eight, cumulative, summative assessments are given twice a year, once at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. In addition to these results determining the progression of the classroom instruction, these assessments help prepare the students for the rigors of high school exams.

The instruction and the rigor of the curriculum at St. Robert Bellarmine School is driven by the expectation that all students, regardless of their academic abilities, will learn and be successful. What has been altered are the methods, strategies and instruments that are used to achieve these goals. The closure of the school in March 2020 did not change that expectation. What did change was the delivery of curriculum. Teachers instructed their students via Zoom whole group lessons and created "breakout" rooms for guided instruction

in reading, math and language arts. The subjects of science, social studies and religion were done cross-curricular. This enabled the teachers to collaborate, plan together and sometime co-teach via Zoom. The collaboration and teacher support created a successful learning experience for all students.

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

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

The preschool program has been in place at St. Robert Bellarmine School for about 25 years. The program is the foundation on which all other curricular areas stem. All core curricular areas previously mentioned are part of the preschool program and are taught regularly to three, four, and five- year-old children. The curriculum is aligned with the standards of the early childhood program for students in grades kindergarten through grade three. This is done in collaboration among teachers from those grade levels. The result of this collaboration, in conjunction with parental support, has developed a strong, academic preschool program which accommodates a large population of students that will eventually graduate from St. Robert Bellarmine School. These children are independent and have the foundational skills they need in each core curricular area to achieve success.

The preschool program adapted seamlessly to the COVID-19 protocols. Similar to the protocols that were implemented in grades kindergarten through eight, the preschool program practiced the health measures such as wearing masks, disinfecting all surfaces every 40 minutes, washing hands regularly and maintaining safe distances. The students adapted quickly and followed the examples of the older students. The implementation of these protocols has permitted St. Robert Bellarmine preschool to remain open since August 2020.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The visual arts program serves students in kindergarten through grade eight. Students experience art either biweekly, weekly, depending on their grade level. Students practice basic skills in multiple art mediums ranging from pencil drawings to three-dimensional work. The art curriculum provides practice and application of critical thinking and problem-solving skills by teaching students to use information they learn about art concepts to create unique and meaningful art. The instruction encourages self-assessment skills by teaching students how to identifying strength areas of opportunity in their work.

The vocal and performing arts program serves students in kindergarten through grade eight. All students attend this biweekly class. The curriculum involves students in creating music, listening to music, and making connections to music and the world. It provides exposure to different types of music from a variety of cultures and helps students to appreciate and understand the impact of music upon those cultures. Students learn and practice the basics in music theory, music history, composition, proper singing techniques, use of Orff instruments, and many non-pitched percussion instruments. Students are then encouraged to use the information they learn about music and apply it to their everyday lives.

The physical education/health nutrition curriculum at St. Robert Bellarmine School serves students in grades kindergarten through grade eight, biweekly. The curriculum offers opportunities for proficiency in a variety of movement skills, concepts, and principles, stressing cooperation and sportsmanship while playing in both small and large group settings.

St. Robert Bellarmine School offers Spanish to sixth grade students biweekly and seventh and eighth grade students four times per week. Students experience the culture of Spanish-speaking countries as well as the cultural elements of the Spanish language. Sixth grade students learn essential vocabulary and basic language skills. In seventh grade students progress further into the areas of reading, writing, and speaking. Eighth grade Spanish curriculum prepares students for high school by focusing on comprehension of oral and written language, fluency in speaking, and improvement of pronunciation.

The technology program at St. Robert Bellarmine School is to develop innovative learners in a dynamic digital world. The standards include digital citizenship, operations and concepts, communication and collaboration, creativity and innovation, information management, and critical thinking. All students visit the computer lab weekly to learn computer skills and to create projects that are integrated into other subject areas. They develop skills in Excel spread sheets, Google classroom, iMovie and keyboarding. Other technologies utilized by staff and students include virtual reality goggles, laptops, iPads, SmartBoards, document cameras, and projectors.

The religion program is experienced by all students every day. The Catholic faith is the reason for the school's existence; therefore, it is only natural that faith shows up formally and informally in all aspects of a school day. Students are able to practice life-long skills and take these skills with them well past their time at St. Robert Bellarmine School. The curriculum revolves around the following goals: proclaiming the message of faith and morals, fostering community, encouraging worship and prayer and serving others.

3. Academic Supports:

Teachers utilize a plethora of instructional methods including but not limited to advanced organizers, cues and questions, nonlinguistic representations, note taking, providing practice, summarizing, generating and testing hypotheses, and identifying similarities and differences. While utilizing various approaches to instruction, teachers have the option of using technological devices that include SmartBoards, document cameras, iPads, and computers. The use of data from different sources drives the instruction and identifies groups and individuals who need a differentiated approach to instruction in order to be successful. For example, standardized test data is analyzed, and instruction is built around students who are identified as needing intervention in particular areas.

The most visible form of differentiated instruction comes within the grouping of students for reading and math classes. Students are assigned, based on a rubric, to a class that best support their academic needs. These placements are organized by grade level class. The school is able to utilize this approach because instruction with the three resource teachers focus on interventions and support for the student. This allows math and reading groups to be smaller in all grade levels. In addition, math and language arts in grades five and six and math, English and Spanish in grades seven and eight, are also smaller classes. The benefit of this grouping is other curricular classes are smaller as well. Through smaller class sizes and differentiated approaches, the curriculum is implemented and students are able to meet their own academic goals. These classes allow all student access to what they need.

In 2019, a partnership with Madonna School, St. Pius/Leo; and St. Robert Bellarmine School established an inclusive special education program for students with mild to moderate developmental and learning disabilities to receive specialized services, plus individualized, faith-based instruction side-by-side with their peers. The students in the learning center are in grades four through six and they work collaboratively with their general education peers in all subject areas.

St. Robert Bellarmine School uses a Student Success Team approach to further identify students with special needs or to monitor students who have individualized education plans or accommodation plans. A team approach is utilized including teachers, administrators, parents and sometimes students. During the meetings, a collaborative effort allows concerns to be identified and action plans to be developed. Accommodations are determined, and preferred instructional methods are recorded. A summary of the plan of action is given to all teachers who educate the student, including specialists to be implemented and carried out within the classroom. This approach gives the students many opportunities to achieve academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

St. Robert Bellarmine School develops educational programs that allow students to grow in their faith, academic and personal journeys. Students in grades kindergarten through grade six receive instruction from the guidance counselor. The curriculum educates students on self-esteem, positive self-image, choices and mentor relationships. The seventh and eighth grade students collaborate together in Advisory groups and learn about character building and how to become better individuals. The Advisory group's small size allows the advisory teacher to build relationships and serve as an advocate for all students.

The Student Council, whose main mission is to involve the entire student body in service to the community while promoting a Christ-like culture, is comprised of sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who are elected by both students and teachers. These student leaders develop service opportunities that allow the student body to give back to the community, which builds strong community relationships.

The Student Mentoring program was established at St. Robert Bellarmine School ten years ago. Selected seventh and eighth grade students assist younger students in a variety of academic and social-emotional areas. These leaders of the community help the younger students with homework and play games with them, or just listen and spend time with the mentees. This program creates a positive environment and enables relationships to develop between students. It also allows a social venue that encourages students to peer coach and model problem solving to younger classmates. Both middle school students and primary students grow emotionally because each party understands the need to assist another person in the learning community.

The Student Ambassador program allows the eighth grade students to actively engage in conversation with parish community members. The staff at St. Robert Bellarmine School is highly involved in assisting ambassadors to develop topics to connect with older parishioners. These students learn how to participate in stimulating educational discussions with adults. St. Robert Bellarmine School is a community of learners who support and guide each other. The Teacher Mentoring program was established to help new teachers make connections between theory and practice and find support from veteran teachers in their professional and personal growth. This relationship is vital to the success of the new teacher. Through this program, all teachers feel a sense of belonging and support as they navigate their professional journeys together.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

St. Robert Bellarmine School supports the community in various ways. Community events are planned to engage families on an annual basis including Open House, Back to School Night, Parent Teacher Conferences, and Book Fairs, to name a few. Unique opportunities are scheduled into the calendar to enhance relationships among all. During Catholic Schools Week, families are invited to celebrate Mass, attend a reception in their honor, and visit the science and history fairs as well as the book fair. Also, speakers from the community are invited to share their expertise with parents as they navigate their role as parents.

St. Robert Bellarmine utilizes the Junior Achievement program to invite business partners from the community to share their skills with students. The school also participates in the TeamMates Program which allows a community member to mentor a student who needs another avenue of support. The parties involved share a lunch period while building a relationship of friendship which focuses on trust, loyalty, and character building.

The school also engages the student body in various service projects involving different groups in the community. These are done in a variety of ways including a walk-a-thon, collections of goods for shelter throughout the school year, and supporting Special Olympics.

Student Ambassadors is a program in which a group of eighth grade students are selected based on the

ability to anticipate other's needs the confidence to initiate and sustain conversations with adults, and the fortitude to display personal leadership skills. The student ambassadors help to build stronger relationships with parishioners by hosting monthly meet and greet receptions. During the receptions, the ambassadors converse with older parishioners. Over the course of the time these conversations happen, unique relationships are built which strengthen both the school and parish communities.

The Home and School Association is a supportive, enthusiastic group of parents who go above and beyond in assisting the school to be its very best. The list of community building activities in which they are involved include various annual events. The main fundraiser of the year takes place in a fun, community building way that involves all families. Family Fun Night event takes place during Catholic Schools Week at the end of January and promotes exactly what its name proposes. The Home and School Association shows its appreciation of teachers in ways that certainly promote a positive morale, which in turn promotes student success and school improvement.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The professional development approach utilized by the St. Robert Bellarmine staff is not only structured and tied to strategic planning, student achievement and teacher professional goals, but it is also open ended in order to give staff a chance to learn and grow in areas not covered by the strategic plan or particular teacher goals.

The professional growth plan guides teacher assistance and growth by requiring teachers to write three to four goals each school year. Two of those goals are connected to a school-wide goal while the other one or two goals are tailored to each specific teacher. For example, over the past several years, teachers were asked to choose from the following areas which were directly linked to school wide goals: iPad implementation in the classroom, making curriculum connections, implementing three strategies from the book Classroom Instruction That Works, designing a new plan for meeting the needs of above grade level students, developing a plan to increase the amount of time the teacher assistant works with students, and increasing the use of the SmartBoard as an interactive tool.

By connecting teacher goals to school-wide goals, students and teachers create environments that are conducive to student achievement. Students are able to reap the benefits when teachers learn and grow professionally. For example, time and money have been spent in technology integration at St. Robert Bellarmine School. Through training and much practice for teachers, the students have benefitted greatly. The many technology improvements teachers have been able to implement have not only enhanced learning but have also inspired teaching.

In conjunction with professional development with best practices outlined in Classroom Instruction That Works and McCrell walkthroughs for informal observations to collect data that is related to instruction, staff members of St. Robert Bellarmine School have also participated in guided reading, Love and Logic, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) and Multi-Tiered System of Support(MTSS) professional development.

During the spring of 2020, COVID-19 compelled the staff to instruct students remotely. These challenging times, allowed the staff to collaborate, plan and implement remote learning plans and activities for all the students in preschool through grade eight. Teachers led informal in-services in the area of technology to meet the needs of students in a remote setting. The e-learning partnership between teacher and student, teacher and parent, and student and parent, created a dynamic culture and growth in the community.

4. School Leadership:

Leaders of all to Christ~Learning Today and Leading Tomorrow. This is the creed for which all members of the St. Robert Bellarmine community strive for each day. Leadership is not only observed formally through positions within the organizational structure, but also personally by all members of the community.

Excellence is an important part of leadership at St. Robert Bellarmine School. Professional development
NBRS 2021

was implemented so that teachers would practice this personally and would have the tools necessary to help students understand what excellence looks like and how it can be achieved. The training revolved around setting goals, standards and outcomes for demonstrating personal achievement.

Striving for excellence is the ultimate goal at St. Robert Bellarmine School and is accomplished through a philosophy of collaboration. The principal leads the community in all aspects of what makes up a day, a week, a month and a year in the life of a school. However, this is not done alone. The school is fortunate to have a full time assistant principal who assists in all operations of the school. The teachers lead their peers while they serve as unit leaders and curriculum coordinators. Students experience formalized leadership roles through participation in the Student Council and Student Ambassadors programs.

The leadership within the school considers its primary role to ensure that all policies, programs, relationships and resources focus on student achievement. The collaborative approach ensures that all are working together toward achieving excellence for all students. One example of this approach is the MTSS problem-solving process among the specific grade units. The utilization of the four-step process: Define the problem or goal, analyze the problem and relevant data, implement an intervention plan, evaluate the intervention for effectiveness; the process allows teachers to meet, explore, and discuss best practices. Many ideas come from the collaborative meetings that contribute greatly toward rigorous academic and social/emotional programs.

During COVID, the principal and assistant principal worked collaboratively to develop a plan prior to the closing of the school. A framework and schedule were developed for teachers to use for planning and implementation of daily remote learning lessons. The leadership team created a pandemic plan that would be a resource for all families. This plan included step-by-step instructions of health plans for students, homework plans, social-emotional tools, and resources for COVID questions. The principal and assistant principal roles were visionaries, facilitators, and communicators in aspects of educating the students.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

St. Robert Bellarmine School has always addressed the diverse needs of students, families and staff. The school recognizes that diversity is not limited to the color of one's skin but in the socio-economic levels, the diverse religions, not just Catholicism, and the diversity in learners. At St. Robert Bellarmine School an environment is created to support instructional methods that validate and reflect the diversity, identities, and experiences of all students. When this is achieved, it raises the level of academic rigor for all learners.

Over the fifty years that St. Robert Bellarmine School has been in existence it has always accepted students of all races, creeds and economic standing. By accepting all of these groups, it has grown into a community that serves others. It has enabled the depth of spiritual awakening to be instilled in students every day. These all-encompassing attributes have strengthened not only the academic program at St. Robert Bellarmine School, but the culture of the community by truly living our Catholic faith.

There are opportunities for the students to learn how to understand and be compassionate to current societal issues. The students read novels about discrimination and social injustice, volunteer on Indian reservations and in local shelters, and assist students with atypical learning needs.

If a family in the St. Robert Bellarmine community needs assistance or support, students and families offer support by collecting food, clothing and money to help the family in need. They do this because they live their faith and follow the teachings of Jesus. Also through Catholic Charities, the families can receive emotional support services. The staff have sponsored families at

Christmas and served meals together at local shelters. These experiences are shared with students.

Through guidance lessons on social and emotional learning, completed with the school counselor in whole group instruction in grades kindergarten through five, and in small group in grades six through eight, students are able to navigate multiple contexts both inside and outside of school.

Finally, cultural awareness along with MTSS, work together to create equitable learning for all students. Both create instruction that engages students with the student's needs in mind.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Prior to March 13, 2020, the staff at St. Robert Bellarmine School always supported each other and worked together in the best interest of the students. Teachers collaborated, according to units, by planning lessons together for their respective classes, working on committees in a parallel manner, and praying together to build spiritual bonds. All of these instances helped build a wonderful school community. However, on March 13, 2020 that dynamic changed immediately. Teachers in different grade levels met and planned and shared resources, creating tutorials and leading Zoom meetings while walking through how to use products. Teachers drew on their strengths to support their fellow colleagues. When a colleague was struggling with preparations for remote learning, another colleague assisted and supported them so that they could be successful in educating the students.

These skills of cooperation and collaboration are what has made St. Robert Bellarmine school successful during the trying times of COVID-19. The Coronavirus challenged all people in ways that were never thought imaginable. Lives were turned completely upside down in a matter of weeks, but the staff of St. Robert Bellarmine School managed to mitigate this disruption by banding together. Units that previously did not interact began sharing resources. Now, at the end of the semester these comrades stand together in strength during these unsettling times. Without the cooperation and collaboration that the staff of this school exhibited over the past nine months, St. Robert Bellarmine School might not have its doors open right now. Through seamlessly working together, this community has created both a human and digital culture that not many schools in the city of Omaha can challenge in its caliber.

However, finishing this semester might feel like the end of a long journey, but there are further challenges that lie ahead. The spring of 2021 will offer many more Covid-19 related issues and challenges that will need to be resolved swiftly and cooperatively. The determination, hard work and collaboration that has been exhibited the past semester will continue and the education of the students will not suffer. This mindset will continue to uphold the St. Robert Bellarmine educational mission of preparing its students for high school as well as the education and career opportunities that lay beyond.

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? \$4135
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$100
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 2%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%

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)