

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

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

School Mailing Address 6923 Stow Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Hudson State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44236-3240

County Summit

Telephone (330) 342-4200 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.setoncatholicschool.org E-mail alestockk@setoncatholicschool.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Frank O'Linn E-mail folinn@dioceseofcleveland.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Cleveland Tel. (216) 696-6525

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. John Schmidt
(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	23	45
1	23	25	48
2	23	28	51
3	21	31	52
4	18	22	40
5	32	19	51
6	22	22	44
7	21	19	40
8	24	24	48
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	206	213	419

*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
 - 5 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 6 % 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: 2%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	5
(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)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	423
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 8

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
8 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</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: 10

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	7
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 21:1

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%	98%	98%	97%	96%
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. 2009

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

Inspired by Saint Elizabeth Anne Seton and rooted in our Catholic faith, Seton Catholic School fosters spiritual development, academic excellence, responsibility to self, and service to others.

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.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Seton has offered both in-person and distance learning options. The school opened as planned on August 26, 2020 with learners on campus and at home. Our school has been open five days per week, following our traditional calendar, with health and safety protocols in place.

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

Seton Catholic School is a community of staff and families committed to the common goal of providing a rich, faith-filled elementary school experience for students. We were founded by families with a clear vision of a strong, independent, culturally and spiritually rich home for their children. Located within a public school district that historically ranks among the top districts in the state, Seton provides an option for parents who desire a Catholic experience and expect academic excellence. [SEP]

Parents describe the talented and compassionate staff, high standards for academics, and beautiful, safe campus as the perfect fit for their children. There is a strong sense of community as parents serve on our Board of Directors, participate in the Parent Teacher Organization, volunteer in the Library and lunchroom, and respond to every request to support their beloved school. Many refer to the “Seton Spirit” as the feeling one gets upon joining the school community, extending to our active, supportive alumni families. Seton is unique in that we are not attached to a parish but are guided and supported by a board of directors comprised of parents and educators from secondary and post-secondary academic institutions, and parents with expertise in finance, technology, and education. [SEP]

The Seton Catholic School Staff is committed to meeting the needs of all students. We believe curriculum and instruction must provide for the diverse needs and abilities of all learners. Our comprehensive curriculum engages students in active, personal learning, with an emphasis on problem-solving, creativity, and discovery. We describe our educational philosophy as blending the best practices of traditional Catholic education with progressive opportunities. We teach students to think critically, solve problems creatively, and collaborate with one another in their learning. Student learning is enhanced with co-curricular activities in writing, science, math, social studies, technology, and the arts. Academic enrichment and support are provided to students. ELA teachers use instructional strategies, such as mentor texts, and the inclusion of word study and phonics that build a strong literacy foundation. A Reading Specialist provides parallel literacy instruction to second and third graders who are not achieving at grade level. Math teachers encourage students to explain their answers and to seek multiple solutions to given problems. A strong middle school mathematics program allows Seton graduates to earn two years of high school math credit when at Seton. Our science program is filled with environmental experiences: a pond ecosystem, pollinator gardens, vegetable and flower gardens, and compost areas.

[SEP]In addition to academics, extracurricular activities include vocal and instrumental music, art, technology, social, spiritual, and leadership experiences. Eighth grade girls support sixth graders as Seton Sisters, providing support, guidance and friendship. Seventh graders serve as Seton Crew, assisting teachers of younger students, delivering messages from the office, and leading the Recycling Team. Students in grades 4-8 serve as Student Council members, learning to represent their peers and work collaboratively as a team. Eighth grade students produce and present a daily morning news show complete with the weather, school information, and other newsworthy topics. During this school year, the SCS-TV team expanded their responsibilities to include live streaming of weekly Masses and prayer services, as well as pre-recorded PSA for the school community. As a Catholic School, our Campus Ministry program is central to our mission. Students participate in Rosary Club, minister at school Liturgies, and contribute thousands of hours to service initiatives.

[SEP]The Seton Strong Planning team was created in recognition that the 2020-2021 school year would bring unprecedented challenges. The team of school administrators, teachers, and parents identified key beliefs that would guide decisions for re-opening the school. The team redesigned physical space within the building to ensure students could socially distance, devised a distance learning plan based on research-based online pedagogies, and communicated with parents to provide updates. The Seton Strong team ensured learning would continue for all students, once again demonstrating the strength of the Seton community. [SEP]

In 2009, Seton Catholic School earned a National Blue Ribbon School award. If you call our school today, you will be greeted with, "Thank you for calling Seton Catholic School, a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence." We proudly fly our Blue Ribbon Flag in front of our school building each day. Seton Catholic School was in its infancy, having only been open for twelve years, when it earned its first Blue Ribbon

Award. Many changes in education have taken place in the past 11 years, including expanded STEM curriculum, enhanced skills in communications, collaboration, and critical thinking, and improved instructional technology. But the mission of the school remains steadfast. Seton Catholic School provides a faith-based education in which academic excellence, citizenship, and service define the experience for every student. Seton is a school in which administrators, teachers, and parents work together on behalf of the students they care for so deeply.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

The Seton Catholic School curriculum is guided by The Diocese of Cleveland’s curriculum, based on the Ohio Learning Standards. Seton strives to create a rich learning environment valuing strategic thinking, problem solving, and creative expression. Furthermore, the Seton curriculum is rooted in spiritual development and is committed to students’ social emotional growth.

When schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers collaboratively established online learning plans and contacted families so that any child who needed a device could borrow a chromebook. The Seton technology team created an online platform to organize and house instructional materials. Teachers held regularly scheduled synchronous classes. Digital tools such as Loom, Screencastify, PearDeck, Nearpod, and FlipGrid were used to implement instruction and create opportunities for student interaction and engagement.

Seton maintains a commitment to implementing research-based practices, both during in-person and online instruction. For the 2020-2021 academic year, families had an option of either in-person instruction or to enroll as a distance learner. Cameras were installed in classrooms to provide live instruction. Students in grades K-4 participate in live, synchronous instruction for reading, English language arts, math, religion, and Spanish. Google Classroom is used for asynchronous instruction for social studies science, music, art, and physical education. Middle school students participate in live, synchronous instruction for all core subjects, including Spanish; specials are asynchronous. Additionally, music and orchestra use FlipGrid so that students can record performances and receive individualized feedback. While teaching continues to align to learning objectives, instructional activities are modified to provide safe social distancing during in-person instruction and to ensure all instruction is accessible to distance learners.

Science

Seton's outdoor resources, including a pond, pollinator gardens, teaching gardens, and composting are used to engage students in inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning. Students participate in projects such as examining soil in ecosystems, diversity in plants, and applied graphing and data analysis skills. Students conduct stream assessments, and trace the movement of water through a watershed from building runoff, to drainage, to stream flow, and lake input and outflow. During outdoor and in-classroom instruction, students apply conceptual knowledge of science by using the scientific process of making predictions, observations, recording data, and analyzing data. Students use data to meet writing standards for comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and explaining inferences.

Reading/ELA

Reading and writing instruction is implemented through integrating direct instruction, modeling, and interactive experiences. Students receive direct instruction in phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar, in addition to reading high quality literature and having choice for independent reading. Writing instruction is implemented across the curriculum as students learn rhetorical strategies. Additionally, author visits provide writing experiences using authors’ books as mentor texts.

Literacy experiences are interdisciplinary by combining science, social studies and the arts through established relationships with Playhouse Square and Magical Theater Company. First Grade participates in STREAM ACADEMY, in which students adapt the engineering design process to meet the needs of Fairy Tale Characters by generating and implementing design proposals.

Tiered instructional practices for reading instruction occurs across all grade bands. In K-5 a reading specialist and classroom aides provide differentiated and individualized instruction, while also co-teaching to support the integration of literacy comprehension strategies. Differentiated book clubs support students in developing reading stamina, acquiring vocabulary, and learning to converse about literature.

Mathematics

The mathematics curriculum is founded on a blended philosophy of foundational skills ensuring that students are able to apply number concepts, compute, and calculate. Teachers identify progressive ways to apply those skills by pairing them with critical thinking, problem solving, quantitative reasoning, STEM, and designing so students learn multiple ways to attempt to solve a problem. Teachers ensure that students have the understanding of number sense, or the intuitive understanding that numbers are composed of other numbers, and that numbers relate to each other through hands-on learning with visual representations and manipulative.

Social Studies

Social Studies is enriched with literature and inquiry-based connections. Students read and analyze primary sources, nonfiction, and historical novels. Students engage in financial literacy and historical simulations. Sixth grade students design individual projects for the U.N. fair, and seventh graders develop National History Day projects.

Formative and Summative Assessments

Seton students take the MAP test three times over the course of each year. After each testing period, teachers discuss results, trends, and goals in grade bands and content areas. MAP assessments provide important feedback for teachers to provide focused instruction to meet the academic needs of students. MAP assessments are shared with parents/guardians as they are partners in their child's academic development.

MAP tests, combined with formative and summative assessments, are used to identify students' academic performance, development, and needs. DIBELS in Grades K-2 provides benchmark screening and progress monitoring. Additionally, Star Reading Assessments and 3-Minute Reading Assessments are administered to assess individual reading levels. Formative assessments are used to provide targeted instruction.

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

The Seton middle school team recognizes the importance of providing a middle school culture that is affirming, challenging, and values the diverse needs and interests of young adults. Through weekly PLC meetings, the middle school teaching team addresses interventions for individual students, designs active and purposeful integrated lessons, and strives to innovate instruction according to the diversity of the students. The middle school curriculum is challenging, exploratory and interdisciplinary. For example, middle school students use data from science and social studies to learn to compose research essays, as well as informational, persuasive, and argumentative essays. The teaching team maintains high academic standards and cultivates high expectations for all students.

Social-emotional competence is supported within the curriculum. While teachers have undergone specific training to address students' social-emotional needs, additional programming is brought in to address mental health, disabilities awareness, suicide prevention, depression, and responsible decision-making, specifically in regards to social media.

Educators also offer a wide array of co-curricular experiences for middle school students, including service organizations designed to build student leadership skills. Through Student Council, Seton Crew, Seton Sisters, Seton Serves, Garden Club, and Habits of the Heart, students identify needs and serve the community locally or beyond, researching and developing initiatives to benefit others. Through Science Olympiad, Power of the Pen, math competitions, choir, orchestra, school musicals, STEM Fair, and National History Day, students effectively extend their classroom knowledge. Most of these initiatives are continuing to operate during COVID restrictions, albeit under new principles of organization that recognize social distancing and safety. For example, Student Council meetings include virtual student council representatives. In short, students are highly successful as they move on to selective high schools because their instructional team is a caring, collaborative, responsive team.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Seton Catholic School offers specialized curriculum classes with all students attending classes once or twice per week depending on curriculum area and grade level. Distance learners take their language course synchronously, and have opportunities to take other specialized classes asynchronously. Students take classes with teachers licensed in visual and performing arts, physical education, foreign language, computer technology, and library. The learning that takes place in these classes allows students to be better stewards of the world.

In art, students are taught essential art elements and techniques required to express creativity as individuals. Students learn to develop an appreciation for art by studying art history, artists and various cultures.

Music class emphasizes music of the Liturgy on both sacred and secular levels. Students in grades K-2 learn to enjoy music and explore its basic elements. Grades 3-5 focus on becoming a musician. They learn to read music, play instruments, and to harmonize. Grades 6-8 become musicians of the world learning about international and American music. Starting in 4th grade students can join the orchestra and choir providing music for Mass, and also going out into the community to share music in diverse ways.

In Physical Education students engage in a wide variety of sports and activities to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.

Spanish is the primary language studied at Seton, with students in grades K-3 studying once a week and Grades 5-8 studying twice a week with a goal of Spanish I competency by the end of 8th grade. Students in 4th grade take French in order to develop a more rounded world view. The language program enables students to communicate proficiently about everyday situations and helps them to become more culturally aware.

In technology classes, students develop fundamental competencies with computers and applications to understand effective use and roles in their world. Students develop problem-solving skills, become creative and effective users of digital productivity tools, and become informed, responsible, and contributing technology-literate citizens.

Students in 8th grade can opt to participate in the daily on air announcements in SCS TV. Students learn first-hand skills to work behind and in front of a television camera by running the video and audio portions of the announcements, writing scripts, as well as how to be professionals on the air.

In Library, K-2 students engage in storytelling and literacy activities. Students in grades 3-8 employ Google Classroom to learn how to evaluate sources for research projects. Additionally, in grades 6-8, students work on organizational skills and study strategies.

Included within the library is a makerspace where students participate in STEM activities related to books being read in the library. For example, after reading *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Kamkwamba, 2010), students learned more about wind energy and collaboratively designed and built windmills. Additionally, the makerspace has a tower garden where the students have grown lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, and flowers. Students in grades 4-8 can participate in Robotics.

3. Academic Supports:

In 2018, Seton became a pilot school for the Better Together Initiative, a diocesan-wide model for acceptance of children with disabilities who desire a Catholic education. Through the Better Together initiative teachers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of students.

MAP and DIBELS tests, combined with formative and summative assessments, are used to identify below-level performances. Once students are identified, Seton has multiple ways to support students' academic development. Resource teachers in grades K-4 provide remediation in reading and math, both as small group instruction and in tandem with classroom teachers as whole group instruction. Resource teachers also work individually with students in grades K-8 before and after school. Seton also has a reading specialist who provides daily differentiated reading instruction to students in 2nd and 3rd grade. Additionally, Seton has two other teaching assistants for students needing remediation and additional support in grades 4-8.

Students performing below grade level are monitored through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Grade level teams work with the school psychologist and the Better Together coordinator to gather data and identify strategies and supports to help students succeed. As students move through the RTI process, teachers and support staff implement interventions. If a student gets to tier 2 without success, the student is then referred for evaluation for special education services.

Seton Catholic School's special education population makes up 2% of the total enrollment. While these students complete the same assessments and instruction that the rest of the school population receives, instruction is adjusted to meet the individual needs of students in the same environment as their peers. The majority of instruction for identified students takes place in the general classroom. The support staff at Seton collaborates with the classroom teachers to assist students and address IEP goals. The typical interventions are dependent on the need and grade level of each student. Often students are given preferential or flexible seating, copies of notes, chunked assignments, or small group instruction. Special Education students at Seton have an Accommodation Plan and the Seton staff works directly with the public district and parents to make sure the needs of each individual child are being met.

Students performing above grade level are identified by teachers using MAP assessments and classroom data. Teachers across the grade levels plan enrichment lessons and activities that provide opportunities for our above grade level students to be challenged and continue to grow academically. Instruction is differentiated across the curriculum to allow students performing at a higher level to move at an accelerated pace. Students in middle school are placed in fluid reading groups based on the mastering of specific objectives that are determined through MAP testing data. These groups change throughout the year and provide challenging opportunities and support for students. For math, middle school students are grouped, and two groups are advanced level groups (one grade level above and two grade levels above). Each year two-thirds of our 8th grade students graduate with high school credit in mathematics.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Students are the most valuable assets in the Seton Community. Seton strives to have a school environment that is welcoming and affirming. Throughout the school year, students participate in “I AM SETON” Days, wearing matching shirts and are often reminded that, “You are Seton, wherever you go”.

Our sense of community, and family, is established once a student enters through our Seton doors and is present until graduation. Every year, our eighth grade students eagerly anticipate meeting their Kindergarten Buddies. Throughout the school year, these special friends participate in school events together, such as the sock hop to celebrate the 50th day of school, Lenten service projects, and environmental science activities. Even with social distancing, the 8th Grade Buddy program continues to be valuable and meaningful. Creative ways to engage with one another have included virtual conversations and activities. Each year, at the Grade 8 Graduation, Seton alumni, now college seniors, send messages to their former “little buddies”. There is a strong sense of pride in our Seton community and many refer to Seton Catholic School as a family.

When schools were forced to move to remote learning, Seton staff adopted the philosophy that teaching and learning would continue at Seton Catholic School. We pledged that a Seton education would continue to be dynamic and engaging. We were guided by three C’s: consistency, communication, and compassion. Even though all instruction was remote, it was important for students to feel like they were still valued members of a community. Each morning, our school principal continued the announcements from her home. These daily communications provided a sense of continuity and familiarity during a time that was so uncertain for staff, students, and families. Announcements included prayer, current school news, and student birthdays. Each week there was a Principal’s Challenge to engage students and families. One week the principal showed the stack of Seton wear from her closet and asked students to guess how many Seton shirts she had (87!). Another time students were asked to share a picture of how they were providing service to their families during lockdown. These activities created a sense of community during the time when we were all at home.

As distance learning continued as an option during the 2020-2021 school year, Seton teachers employed strategies to fully engage distance learners. Students who are learning at home continue to participate in school activities. Kindergarten students were in the Alphabet Fashion Show. Fourth graders check their math homework in small groups that include students in the classroom and at home. Middle School students carry their Chromebooks to the lunchroom so that students at home can participate in the social conversations at the lunch table. Distance Learners can visit school each Sunday to collect any print materials for the upcoming week. These students have gotten their pictures taken for the yearbook, shopped at the online St. Nicholas Shop, and even enjoyed an ice cream treat. Distance Learners are engaged with their classmates and virtually participating in social activities.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Seton Catholic School is recognized as a valuable, contributing member to the communities it serves. Seton Catholic School is committed to engaging students in meaningful giving and service. Each month a grade level selects a charitable cause to be the recipient of their generosity. The donations from that month’s dress down day benefit the selected charity. This year our Kindergarten class selected a pregnancy care center, and along with their donation held a baby shower to donate items to the center. Grade 5 chose a homeless shelter and collected warm socks to accompany their monetary donation. First graders supported a pediatric cancer center and donated decorated baseball caps to the children’s hospital. Additionally, sixth graders accompany their teacher to the regional food bank, while seventh graders complete annual environmental service projects at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. There are also many all-school service projects. Each November, Seton classes donate 20 Thanksgiving baskets to local schools and organizations. These baskets provide enough food for 20 families over the five-day holiday weekend, as well as grocery gift cards. Furthermore, various school clubs, such as Habits of the Heart, serve local communities, including Haven of

Rest homeless shelter, Akron Canton Foodbank, and Akron Children's Hospital. These service projects have continued throughout the COVID-19.

Parents are engaged proactively as members of an active Parent Teacher Organization. This group plans the academic, spiritual, and social extracurricular activities that engage staff, students, and families. Fundraising initiatives support field trips, author visits, staff professional development, school-wide treats, and parent-student social events. Parents and members of the community, including local high school administrators, also serve as the School Board of Directors.

Seton teachers and administrators interact with the community at large, serving on multiple advisory boards and working collaboratively with city leaders. Additionally, STEM Fair judges come from local high schools, parents, community members, and post-secondary institutions.

Although visitors have been unable to come to campus this past semester, Leadership Hudson, Hudson Kiwanis, and city officials have maintained a virtual presence with our students and staff. Seton Catholic School is highly regarded by local parishes, non-profit foundations, high schools in which our students matriculate after graduation and nearby colleges. All of these partnerships help to enrich the Seton experience, and provide support, for our students, staff, and families.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Creating a professional culture is paramount to the mission of Seton Catholic School. Professional development opportunities for teachers are central to teachers' sustained growth as professional educators. Professional development ranges from workshops provided by the Diocese, such as instructional technology and best practices in inclusive education, to participation in state and national education organizations. For example, the middle school team attends the state conference for middle school teachers, and one teacher serves as the president of a national education association (NMLSTA). Additionally, in order to promote instructional learning, teachers can apply for summer scholarships to support professional development or curriculum development. It is important to note that professional development is encouraged and financially supported by the Seton School Board. Each year, the School Board budgets \$25,000 for teachers to use for their professional development needs. Furthermore, in 2020, the Seton School Board also created a Teacher Endowment Fund to support the mission of the school by providing additional funds for hiring, special projects, and instructional needs.

In 2014, Seton established a Principal Advisory Committee (PAC) with eight teachers that meet monthly to provide feedback, vet teacher concerns, and work with the leadership team to solve problems. The PAC has an important role in communicating the needs of the teachers directly to the leadership team. Teachers are also organized in Professional Learning Committees that meet frequently to discuss instructional plans and student needs. Furthermore, in an effort to learn new instructional approaches, teachers have developed and implemented book and study groups. For example, a Project-Based Learning study group read professional materials, implemented classroom instruction, and provided each other feedback after observations for critique and encouragement.

In response to COVID-19, teachers participated in professional development that aligned to the instructional technology plans developed by the Seton Strong team. Furthermore, the leadership team has been responsive to the emotional stress caused by COVID-19. The leadership team has supported teachers by having additional classroom support and even spirit days to lift the spirits of students and staff. Additional cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms and a full time RN nurse with clinic space on campus, provides support while prioritizing health and safety of teachers and students.

4. School Leadership:

Seton Catholic School is an independent, regional Catholic school. The school was founded 23 years ago by families who desired a Catholic elementary school experience for their children. Parent involvement and leadership have always been important dynamics of the school. Seton is guided by a Board of Directors which is comprised of Seton parents and community members who bring expertise and support for the

School Principal. The Board hires the Principal who serves as the spiritual, academic, and managerial leader of the school. The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for the daily operations of the campus and hire a team to support them. Leadership Team members manage finance, advancement, admissions, and communication. A Campus Minister engages the school community in faith-based activities, maintains connections with local parishes, and works to ensure the strong Catholicity of the school. The school staff is composed of talented, dedicated men and women committed to best practices in education. Additionally, the Seton School Board has an Academic Excellence Committee that is made up of parents with educational and wellness expertise and experience who support the Seton Staff.

During this past year the leadership of our school has worked diligently to support the needs of our students. The goal of Seton Strong 2020 Planning Team was to ensure the health and safety of our staff and students on campus, as well as to provide an option for distance learning. It is through this collaboration, and the hard work of many in the Seton Community, that students have been fully engaged in learning during the first semester of the school year.

The School Administration and Board are committed to supporting and advancing the mission of Seton Catholic School. The focus of school leadership teams is always on making decisions that best support student learning and wellness. Seton is blessed to have selfless leaders who are dedicated to the community they serve.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a Catholic school, Seton seeks to welcome and educate students and families of diverse cultural backgrounds. Our student population is reflective of the demographics of our local communities. Each child's family is a valued partner, and we welcome the diversity that each family brings to our school. Families of many different faiths attend Seton Catholic School; our Religion curriculum encourages an exploration and understanding of the traditions of these faiths. Students also are supported in their diverse academic needs. Support services, including speech and language, as well as tutoring, are provided to students. Teachers have curricular autonomy and are knowledgeable about instructional approaches that are inclusive, equitable, and affirming. Through interdisciplinary studies in English language arts, reading, social studies and religion, students have the opportunity to explore the human condition, engage in empathic stances, consider new perspectives, and voice their own experiences in response to what they have learned. Students learn to reflect on their lives and to welcome/respect/value diverse cultures and experiences.

This past August our Seton Staff explored social justice as it applied to the racial unrest we witnessed nationally and globally this past summer. We called our discussion "Social Justice that Matters". These discussions allow us to be mindful of how we contribute to a just world, and how we continue to teach our students to respect and value all people. Furthermore, we recognize that our teachers and students can be a voice to support those most marginalized in our society.

Additionally, the COVID pandemic has allowed many opportunities to talk with our students about honoring our health care workers, educators, and all essential employees working so hard at this time. As we wear our masks and maintain physical distancing, we talk about the importance of doing our part to respect all others we interact with. Our students will be responsible for shaping the world moving forward. As educators, we bear responsibility for helping our students explore the ways that they can be responsive to the needs of others.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Since March of 2020, members of the Seton Catholic School community continued our unwavering commitment to our school mission. We decided as a community that we would not let these times define us. Instead, we would work together to keep our strong sense of community and grow in our spiritual and academic development. Our Seton Strong 2020 Planning Team was formed in recognition that the health crisis our nation faced would cause significant changes to our school practices. The goal of this team was to ensure that the mission, purpose, and operation of Seton Catholic School was steady during this time of uncertainty.

The Seton Strong 2020 Planning Team included Seton teachers and administrators, as well as parents, bringing expertise in education, healthcare, mental wellness, communication, and building facilities. These stakeholders represent all aspects of our school community committed to a vision of continued spiritual development, academic excellence, and social and emotional support for our students.

The single-focused goal of this team is to provide the very best Catholic education possible for our students during this unprecedented time. The team identified the need to provide a safe environment for families who chose to send their children to campus, as well as a premier distance learning experience for students who were at home. Health and safety protocols were established that have allowed students in grades K-8 to attend school in person, five days a week since August, 2020. Our distance learning program that includes daily live instruction in core subjects, and opportunities to participate in fine arts curriculum, has received positive response from our families. Although 15% of our students have not been in our classrooms this year, each of our learners at home are engaged with their peers. Collaborative activities are facilitated with technology, including classroom discussions, group projects, and peer presentations. Students at home participate in daily prayer and in weekly liturgies. Services that are available at school, like speech or tutoring, are provided to students at home.

The strength of our Seton Community is evident in the love and care we show to one another. Each time a decision is made, collaborative discussion allows for input from our stakeholders. Although the 2020-2021 school year looks unlike any other, the work of the Seton Strong 2020 Planning Team ensured that the mission of our school remains strong and that the Seton Spirit is flourishing.

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? \$7580
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2422

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 7%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 15%

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)