

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Sikora
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 51 Wrights Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Newtown State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 18940-1334

County Bucks

Telephone (215) 968-2685 Fax (215) 968-4795

Web site/URL https://www.standrewcec.com E-mail nmatteo@standrewcec.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* Dr. Andrew McLaughlin E-mail amclaughlin@archphila.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Philadelphia Tel. (215) 587-3700

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. Keith McGowan
(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	41	41	82
K	37	32	69
1	21	25	46
2	27	19	46
3	35	26	61
4	24	44	68
5	30	30	60
6	37	31	68
7	30	35	65
8	35	35	70
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	317	318	635

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	558
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 5

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %

17 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 23:1

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	94%	95%	95%	96%	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. 2013

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

Our school fosters a dynamic community of moral, creative, critical thinkers. Students develop spiritually and intellectually. Rigorous academics prepare leaders for a diverse technological world.

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.

Saint Andrew Catholic School opened full-time on Tuesday, September 1, 2020. Families were given a choice of students attending classes in person or virtually, via synchronous instruction, five days a week. About 20 percent of our students attended school virtually through Zoom to start the year. There have been 5 opportunities for students to switch in between virtual and in-person learning. As of March 15, we had approximately 10% of our students learning virtually. All students, faculty and staff wear masks and maintain social distance at all times. Students are spaced five feet apart in the classrooms. In departmentalized grades, the teachers change classes in order to support a cohort model.

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

Situated on 25 acres in suburban Newtown, Pennsylvania, Saint Andrew Catholic School is a flagship school of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. High enrollment and achievement are hallmarks of the school. Serving preschool through eighth grade, students come from high to middle income families. Surrounded by excellent public schools, families are committed spiritually, academically and financially to a quality Catholic education.

The faculty of Saint Andrew Catholic School guides, supports and encourages each student to reach for and meet his or her full potential. Differentiated instruction is utilized extensively by the teachers and has a profound effect on student achievement. A rigorous Honors Math program, which is available for grades 4 through 8, challenges students intellectually and advances them a full-year in mathematics. Best practices in the classroom adhere to archdiocesan and Common Core State Standards and utilize the newest technologies as critical tools for instruction and learning. From preschool through grade 8, the faculty nurtures the intellectual development of each student to promote the highest level of problem-solving and critical thinking.

Saint Andrew Catholic School has various methods of learning support for struggling students. Catapult Learning provides remediation in math and reading for kindergarten through fourth graders. Students meet with the learning specialist two days a week, in small groups, to work on areas with which they experience difficulty. The iReady program is used both in school and at home for support. A learning support teacher, who is a reading specialist, is employed by the school to assist fifth through eighth graders in all subject areas. The students meet with the teacher at least once a week either individually or in small groups in a bright classroom that is free from distractions. The learning support teacher works hand-in-hand with the classroom teachers to address weaknesses and concerns. Testing data is used to further evaluate progress and concentrate on difficulties.

Understanding that students are being prepared for a diverse global society, Saint Andrew Catholic School is proud to offer several co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The importance of financial literacy has been incorporated into the curriculum through Junior Achievement and a fully operational bank. The school houses an FDIC approved branch of the First National Bank and Trust of Newtown. Along with one adult teller, seventh and eighth graders interview and are employed as bank tellers. The bank is open every Thursday. Fiscal responsibility and the importance of saving is stressed through a Banker of the Week program. Students who participate in saving are interviewed on the school news program. The students are asked how they earn money to invest and about their savings goals. The Banker of the Week program is televised every Wednesday afternoon to remind students to bring in their deposits the next day. The bank is on hiatus during the COVID pandemic.

Character education recognizes students for doing random acts of kindness through the Caught Being Good program. Faculty and staff notice students performing nice deeds and submit a form with the child's name, grade and the reason he or she is being acknowledged. Students' names are announced every Friday during the afternoon news telecast. The children receive specially designed t-shirts and gift certificates. The Caught Being Good t-shirts may be worn for physical education classes.

A state of the art television studio is operated by eighth grade students. Morning and afternoon prayers and announcements are televised on closed-circuit throughout the school. News anchors, sports and weather reporters and an administrator appear on the morning telecast with students presenting the daily Spanish word and a fact from "This Day in History." The school day closes with afternoon anchors and an administrator reciting prayers and reminder announcements. Due to the pandemic, morning and afternoon announcements are taking place via Zoom, so our students both in school and at home can participate.

Saint Andrew Catholic School has an outstanding fine arts program which includes choral, band and orchestral music and art. Foreign language, technology and physical education are offered weekly for preschool through eighth grade. An extensive selection of extra-curricular activities includes athletics, Scrabble, newspaper, stock market, art, science fair, an award winning future city program and book clubs.

These programs provide an opportunity for students to enjoy time for social and emotional development outside of the classroom.

The leadership of Saint Andrew School has changed in the last two years. The former principal has assumed the role of president and handles enrollment, marketing, development, fundraising, alumni and all religious observances. The new principal and vice-principal oversee personnel, instruction and continued academic growth. The school has also changed accreditation agencies from Middle States to AdvancED, now Cognia.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

At Saint Andrew Catholic School, the faculty and staff work in partnership with families to develop and maintain the spiritual, social and academic needs of students, to instill a lifetime appreciation for learning and to send forth Christian leaders into a diverse global technological world. Our strong academic program, in accordance with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is committed to exceeding expectations at all levels.

Religion, English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies comprise the core curriculum. During the pandemic, both in person and cyberlearning options are offered. Using Zoom, virtual learners participate in synchronous instruction along with in person classmates. All learners, regardless of location, are learning the same curriculum and remain at grade level standards.

English Language Arts (ELA) – The students develop knowledge, skill and confidence from the ELA curriculum that encompasses reading, writing, speaking and listening. Specific focus also includes comprehension, fluency, phonics instruction, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and written and oral expression. Students are exposed to a variety of literary genres from preschool through eighth grade. Students are guided through the writing process and are encouraged to be both active readers and critical thinkers. Students have ample opportunity for application of ELA skills across the curriculum.

Mathematics – The mathematics curriculum is coordinated by grade level using a spiral format: each successive grade builds on previously presented material. An honors math program is offered to qualifying students in fourth through eighth grades which accelerates instruction one full academic year. Students are engaged in instruction through teacher-directed lessons, modeling, cooperative learning, role-play with word problems, calculator investigations, graphic organizers, escape rooms and hands-on manipulative activities. A variety of assessments are integrated into the program to help document achievement and guide instruction. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are continually developed.

Science – The science curriculum is taught from preschool through eighth grade and combines a traditional approach with hands-on activities. A fully equipped science lab is available for all students, and teachers provide lab activities on a regular basis. Students at the elementary level are introduced to predicting, inferring, forming models and interpreting data. Middle school students learn to think critically and analyze results. The science program promotes higher order thinking skills at all grade levels.

Social Studies – The social studies curriculum allows students to learn about the world around them. Beginning in preschool through eighth grade, students explore and discover different civilizations, governments, religions and law, both past and present. Research field trips, role-playing activities, debates, projects and discussion foster student engagement. Students make connections based on roles in their local community, expanding to the global society. The content area is rich with opportunity for cross-curricular projects and authentic applications.

Religion – Through the religion curriculum, students are empowered to live the message of the Gospel, to foster a community of practiced faith and to promote a generous spirit that brings forth service to others. Religion consists of practice, study and faith formation, which includes prayer and worship. The curriculum is coordinated through grade levels in a spiral continuum according to the archdiocesan guidelines. Appropriate sacramental preparation is offered in grades 2, 6 and 7. All students are encouraged to attend weekly Mass and are required to reflect on and respond to the Gospel Message of the Week which correlates to the weekend Gospel reading. School liturgies occur monthly, and each week an individual grade attends Mass. In addition, there are several other opportunities for worship during Advent, Lent, weekly Adoration and retreats. A ministry team comprised of seventh and eighth grade students facilitates and plans religious observations.

Instructional Methods – Saint Andrew Catholic School teachers dedicate themselves to reaching the needs of every student. The students benefit from a rigorous and relevant curriculum embracing all learning styles

using differentiated instruction. Textbooks are supplemented with discussions, presentations, visual aids, graphic organizers, learning games and activities, cross-curricular assignments and technology. Every classroom is equipped with interactive touch screen technology. First through eighth grade students have one to one technology with Chrome books. Preschool and kindergarten may use technology through borrowing iPad carts. These tools aid in capitalizing on the students' strengths and linking their learning to the world outside the classroom. Cooperative learning and peer tutoring are used to enhance learning, teamwork and interpersonal skills.

Assessment – Teachers informally assess student comprehension of concepts daily and provide necessary support. Individual and group work is used as an alternative type of assessment. Formative assessment occurs daily using natural methods, and instruction is adapted accordingly. Rubrics accompany assignments, giving the students awareness of expectations. Instruction is always planned with assessment in mind and includes formative, summative and project-based assessments. In light of the pandemic, new assessment tools have been utilized like Class Kick, to ensure the integrity and accuracy of assessing students while at home.

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

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

Saint Andrew Catholic School offers many programs for three and four-year olds. Students may attend full or half-days and three or five day sessions. The core curriculum of the preschool includes religion, ELA, mathematics, science and social studies. Since art is used on a daily basis for core curriculum instruction, it is not offered as a special subject. Special subjects include music, Spanish, physical education, library and technology. A dedicated full-time teacher instructs the specials classes to the preschoolers.

Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, all students and staff wear masks. Social distancing is maintained. During the quarantine, teachers created videos and used Zoom. Classrooms are cleaned each evening and multiple times during the day. Teachers and assistants are constantly wiping items that have been used by the children.

The preschool follows the archdiocesan guidelines. Two of our preschool teachers serve on the archdiocesan early childhood curriculum committee and share new findings with their colleagues after each meeting. Both teachers work diligently to help establish archdiocesan policies.

For many of our students the preschool is their first experience with education. Instruction in socialization is as important as academics. Students begin with parallel play and advance to full sharing. Instruction proceeds from gross motor skills to fine motor skills. Letter and number recognition and letter sounds are crucial to success in subsequent grades. Although each teacher employs different methods for instruction, all students ultimately learn. Students who advance from the four-year old program are fully prepared for the kindergarten experience.

The preschool is a cheerful and lively section of the school. Children are always engaged and inquisitive. Happiness emanates from every bright classroom. Teachers employ play to teach many concepts, and the students are amazed when they realize what they know and are able to accomplish.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Visual and Performing Arts – Students are encouraged to express and develop their artistic and musical gifts. Visual and performing arts are incorporated throughout the curriculum in weekly art and music classes for preschool through eighth grade. Students study art appreciation and learn techniques and methods through a variety of media. Student art work and murals are displayed throughout the school. In addition, students regularly participate in local and archdiocesan art contests. Musical shows and concerts provide venues for gifted vocalists, and musicians can participate in two bands or the orchestra. Saint

Andrew Catholic School offers numerous extra-curricular clubs and activities for the arts. Music and art classes are conducted in the dedicated classroom while maintaining social distancing.

Physical Education – Physical education enables students to learn the value of teamwork, cooperation, compassion, perseverance and respect for themselves and others. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged by incorporating fun and educational activities that include exercise and nutrition awareness. Many students continue their athletic endeavors in the parish Catholic Youth Organization. Physical education classes occur in the gymnasium or on the school fields, weather permitting.

Technology and Library – Technology is incorporated throughout the curriculum, and preschool through eighth grade students attend weekly computer classes. Students learn to compile research and create presentations, data bases, movies and learn to code. Students have access to a resource library, computer lab and Chrome books. Additionally, all classrooms are equipped with computers and interactive touch screen technology. Teachers plan lessons in conjunction with the librarian and computer teacher in order to integrate technology. While sixth, seventh and eighth grade students do not attend weekly library class, the librarian works with the middle school teachers to provide enrichment in research skills for students. In order to prepare for high school, eighth grade students work on a capstone project with the classroom, technology and library teachers. They write a term paper on a given topic and must include the appropriate citations. This project begins at the end of seventh grade and continues into eighth grade.

Spanish – Spanish is offered to all students from preschool through eighth grade and follows the archdiocesan guidelines. Students are engaged in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Ample opportunities are provided to witness and experience culture through media and technology. Students are exposed to a Spanish word of the day on the morning television broadcast which encourages vocabulary development. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students attend Spanish classes two days a week. The upper grade Spanish program follows freshman high school Spanish programs to the schools our graduates will eventually attend. Eighth grade students may take an equivalency test to advance to Spanish II in high school.

3. Academic Supports:

The administration and faculty of Saint Andrew Catholic School works constantly to refine their craft to meet the needs of all students. Differentiated instruction is the primary means of achieving that end. New methods are introduced and enhanced to realize success.

Students are identified as independent, instructional and frustrational learners through classroom performance, observation and testing – formative, summative and standardized. Instruction and recommendations are tailored accordingly. Achievement throughout the year is monitored to determine progress and success.

A variety of options are available for students who are performing below expectations. Parents and teachers may refer students to the school counselor for services. Two counselors, provided by Catapult Learning, are available for academic testing to reveal strengths and weaknesses. Parents, teachers and administrators meet with the counselors to review results and determine best practices to help the students.

Students whose counselor's scores indicate special needs are referred to a school psychologist, provided by Catapult Learning, who performs a battery of psycho-educational testing. The psychologist's testing is much more in-depth and can pinpoint strengths and weaknesses with more accuracy. Once again, a meeting is conducted with the psychologist, parents, teachers and administrators. Recommendations are put forth on how to successfully address the analysis. Referrals for outside professionals like physicians, psychologists, tutors and therapists may be offered.

Kindergarten through fourth grade students who are experiencing academic difficulty are eligible to attend Catapult Learning sessions twice a week in reading and/or mathematics in small groups. Students are tested throughout the year to determine progress. Parent conferences are conducted to discuss the children's needs and to make recommendations. iReady, a computerized learning application, is provided for student use both during school and at home to help boost achievement.

Fifth through eighth grade students who are experiencing academic difficulty are eligible to receive services from our learning support program. A full-time teacher, who is a reading specialist, meets with students at least once a week either individually or in small groups. Students may be assisted in any curriculum area. Careful attention is given to scheduling. In order not to miss any core curriculum areas, learning support sessions occur during specials times. The learning support specialist also helps with students who need special accommodations for testing like a quiet room or having a test read orally.

The school guidance counselors also meet with students who are not in need of academic testing but whose other issues may impact learning. Grief counseling, organization skills and friendship groups are just some of the many services provided. The school receives the services of a hearing therapist for students who have hearing loss. A speech therapist works at the school three days a week to provide services to students with articulation and language needs.

Classroom teachers encourage independent learners with challenging lessons and projects. Students work at their own pace on rigorous advanced levels. The Honors Math program is available for qualifying students in fourth through eighth grades. Various extra-curricular activities challenge exceptional students.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Engaging students is absolutely crucial at Saint Andrew Catholic School. Without engagement, learning suffers. Creating and maintaining engagement is constantly challenging.

Gone are the days of only teacher led instruction. Students must be involved in the educational process as much as possible. Many different methods are employed in putting learning into the hands of the students: think-pair-share, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, peer tutoring,

hands-on discovery, internet searches, Socratic seminar, etc. Our teachers continuously work to enhance their lessons and eliminate techniques that do not work.

The change to Cognia, formerly AdvancED, as an accreditation agency, has shifted the focus of observing learning and instruction from the teacher to the student. The observation tool used by the administration clearly puts the emphasis on watching the students' engagement. The principal and vice-principal meet with the teachers to discuss successful student involvement and how to improve it.

On many occasions, in observing classrooms, the administrators become as enthralled and involved in the educational process as the students. Some classrooms appear to be "theater in the round" with all stakeholders performing roles. When students realize that they are directly responsible for their own success, they perform accordingly.

Walking through the hallways on any given day, one could overhear lively classroom discussions with many contributors all in a respectful environment. Students working together on mathematical calculations on Chrome books and at the board occurs daily. Dialogues of the Gospel Message of the Week take place during religion class with all students presenting their individual take on the priests' sermons. Hands on science experiments have a lasting impact on the retention of scientific learning.

During the quarantine, teachers went to great lengths to capture the students' attention. One teacher dressed as a different character every day – the children could not wait for class to start and see who would be teaching them. Other teachers had special days like crazy hat days, which the children appreciated and enjoyed. The principal sang happy birthday, via Zoom, to every student who had a birthday.

The art teacher, as one example, planned tremendously creative activities. The upper grade students were challenged to recreate famous paintings with themselves as the main characters. Their masterpieces were then displayed next to the originals on the school website and on social media. The results were breathtaking. The lower grade students were challenged to write their names with items from nature. Once again, the end products were amazing.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and community is a high priority at Saint Andrew Catholic School. Our key to success is open, transparent and frequent communication. The student information system, school website, Friday principal email communication, monthly newsletter, parish bulletin, social media and local print media are updated regularly.

Parents are constantly kept informed of their children's progress through FACTS, a student information system. Homework, projects, rubrics and testing dates are posted daily. Families can view grades regularly. Test folders are sent home, and parents are required to sign all tests. Even though the scores are posted, learning from mistakes is crucial. At the end of each trimester, report cards are posted. TerraNova home reports are sent home in the spring. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers with questions or concerns.

The faculty regularly communicates with parents through FACTS, emails and telephone conferences.

Formal parent teacher conferences are conducted annually in the fall. Teachers are encouraged to discuss strengths, weaknesses, recommendations and concerns. Conferences are available throughout the year at the request of the parents or teachers.

Saint Andrew Catholic School communicates to the community at large through the weekly principal Friday email, the monthly newsletter, the church bulletin, the school website and School Messenger – the automated phone and email system. Local media outlets receive press releases and are invited to the school for photo opportunities. Student accomplishments in the form of scholarships, competitions, community service and special events are featured regularly.

Saint Andrew Catholic School maintains a mutually beneficial relationship with all of the high schools to which our graduates matriculate. Other than during the pandemic, the school conducts a popular annual high school night, inviting more than a dozen high schools for an evening presentation to potential new students. Families throughout Bucks County are invited to attend. This event is a wonderful marketing tool for the high schools and Saint Andrew. Additionally, high school admissions directors are invited during the seventh and eighth grade lunch periods to make presentations to our students. Our eighth graders are encouraged to visit high schools during their open houses and to participate in shadow days. For the most part, our students are accepted to their high schools of choice. Our eighth graders receive numerous scholarships, and our students usually earn the largest amount of high school scholarships in the archdiocese.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Saint Andrew Catholic School administration actively supports a strong partnership between the teachers, students and families. Respect is cultivated in all interactions and relationships. The leadership team is a visible presence throughout the school. Informal and formal classroom visits provide opportunities to observe classroom instruction and teacher-student engagement in the learning process. The principal and vice-principal utilize an observation tool which provides feedback to teachers on their progress. Striving toward a commitment to excellence, the administration and faculty place a high priority on continuing professional development. The administration encourages open communication and professional dialogue through weekly Wednesday morning “Circle Time”, monthly faculty meetings and weekly curriculum meetings to discuss innovative data-proven practices. The principal and vice-principal work with the faculty to integrate technology into the curriculum in accordance with the archdiocesan guidelines and the Common Core State Standards. Monthly Home and School Association meetings ensure open communication between parents, teachers and administrators and provide a forum for the exchange of suggestions and ideas.

A collaborative model of leadership is practiced by the administration. Teachers are supported in assuming leadership positions by serving as curriculum coordinators, grade representatives, committee chairpersons, archdiocesan curriculum committee members and by hosting various programs. Suggestions are thoughtfully considered and faculty members work diligently to enrich instruction and learning. Professional sharing is encouraged on all levels. Students are invited to serve on various scholastic, social and spiritual teams within the school in an effort to prepare them to be Christian leaders in a diverse global society.

Before the quarantine occurred, the administrative team had already scheduled professional development on the use of the technology necessary for distance learning. Teachers who were adept in the use of these applications served as mentors for fellow faculty members and provided classes for those who needed help. Archdiocesan training modules were distributed electronically so that faculty members could peruse them at their convenience. The calendar was created to ensure ample time for professional development for all teachers. Additionally, the school provides a \$400.00 annual stipend for principal approved courses that directly influence the improvement of instruction and student achievement. The stipend may also be used to obtain necessary religion and state accreditation. Time off to attend seminars and workshops is approved.

4. School Leadership:

Saint Andrew Catholic School is governed by the policies of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Bound by the principles of spirituality, academics and service, the school is proud to be led by the Reverend Monsignor Michael Picard. In partnership with the pastor, the daily operation of the school is under the supervision of the president, Mrs. Nancy Matteo, the principal, Mr. Robert Sikora and the vice-principal, Mrs. Jessica Wagner. The school is currently recruiting an advisory board, which will be comprised of community leaders who will assist the pastor, president, principal and vice-principal. Mr. Keith McGowan will be the chairperson of the advisory board.

The school adopted the president-principal model in September of 2019. Job descriptions were developed to clearly delineate responsibilities. The president, who was the former principal for 16 years, works closely with the principal and vice-principal and serves as a mentor. The leadership team works well together, frequently meeting informally to brainstorm and problem solve. This paradigm shift ensures that the principal and vice-principal are responsible for learning, instruction and achievement. The president is responsible for the business aspect of education including fundraising, marketing and development. As new issues arise, the group makes decisions based on the team members' strengths and availability.

In addition, a leadership team has been formed consisting of the pastor, president, principal, vice-principal, director of religious education, business manager and human resources director. During the pandemic, the group meets monthly via Zoom. An agenda and link is sent out in advance. Many decisions and policies are established during these meetings.

The principal and vice-principal are extremely savvy with technology. They are responsible for bringing the faculty and families up to speed on the use of Zoom during the quarantine and for the current cyberlearners. They facilitated the purchase of the correct classroom equipment and managed the lending of Chrome books for cyberlearning. Professional development was provided, so all teachers were able to instruct the students seamlessly.

The principal and vice-principal, assisted by the president and specials teachers, greet the students every day at arrival and dismissal. Classrooms are observed formally and informally by the principal and vice-principal. They conduct teacher meetings for setting goals and evaluations. The faculty are able to contact their team leaders at any time. Assisted by a hard-working office team, the school day runs smoothly for all stakeholders.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Saint Andrew Catholic has very little racial and religious diversity; however, enrollment reflects the local demographics. Tolerance is taught mostly through religion class and social studies, but it is modeled throughout the curriculum and the school day. People often make fun of things that they don't understand. The faculty and administration educate the students for understanding and cultural sensitivity.

Although racial and religious diversity are low, Saint Andrew School experiences diversity in other ways. Students are taught the golden rule and the precepts of the Catholic Church. Discrimination of others due to size, weight, socio-economic level, dress, athletic prowess and learning ability is not tolerated. The school's motto – work hard and be kind – is practiced by all stakeholders at all times.

The students are extremely compassionate. Once aware of an issue, they want to help the situation immediately. Be it a natural disaster or a classmate who is ill, the children do whatever they can to assist. Our fathers and their children rake leaves and shovel snow at the homes of those who are physically disabled. They perform Christmas carols at senior citizen facilities. The students run collections of food for the hungry and coat collections for the poor. They donate diapers for a homeless shelter and toiletries for an abused women's shelter. Many of our female students

donate their hair to be made into wigs for children suffering from childhood cancer. Every month classes are assigned to make cards for the people who are on our daily prayer list. These greetings are sent throughout the country. The students are delighted when they receive a grateful response.

Cultural awareness is abundantly demonstrated in Spanish class. Children learn a rich variety of customs and events in Hispanic regions throughout the world. From Dia de los Muertes to Las Posadas, from Cinco de Mayo to local Puerto Rican celebrations, the students participate in learning and appreciating the language, food, music, dance and customs.

Election time proved to be a ripe occasion to teach current events and tolerance. Most students repeated their parents' opinions. The teachers were challenged with educating about the facts concerning all candidates while not expressing their own personal opinions. Children were instructed that it is acceptable to have different opinions and to respect the choice of others.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Saint Andrew Catholic School works to build a strong sense of community with a focus on family. The family atmosphere is palpable upon entering the school and is commented on by many visitors. Our students know they are loved and feel safe. Our teachers are acutely aware that they are in loco parentis during the school day and educate the whole child spiritually, academically, socially and emotionally.

In order to learn, children must know they are safe. Our parish has invested huge financial resources in providing for safety. The school has 24 cameras throughout the campus. An Athena security system has been installed to notify stakeholders if a weapon is present. Emergency procedures are practiced regularly. An alarm system and lockdown strategies are in place. We maintain a wonderful relationship with the police department and welcome officers into the building.

Our students are extremely comfortable at school. They know that all of the teachers and administrators have their best interests at heart. Students may approach any school employee at any time if they have a problem or concern. They are confident that they will be listened to attentively, and everything will be done to help them.

Like all families, we celebrate and mourn together. When a student wins a scholarship or celebrates a milestone, everyone in the building is happy for them and rejoices. If anyone loses a loved one, we pray for them and grieve together.

One of our families is currently experiencing a health and financial crisis. The principal scheduled a dress down day where each student could bring in a minimum of one dollar to dress down. Incredibly, we collected over \$7,500.00!

Last spring, at the start of the quarantine, the principal sent out a daily review of events via email. The communication was continuous and informative. Teachers and administrators reached out to individual families frequently. Emails were answered quickly. Technology troubleshooting was addressed in a timely manner. Every student or staff member who celebrated a birthday while school was closed received a card from the administration. Families created videos for social media on what they were doing and how they longed to return.

The family atmosphere is a great tool for marketing. Potential students observe the kindness of our community. Once we get families into our building, we have a tremendous recruitment rate. Our transfer rate is low because most families appreciate their experience at Saint Andrew Catholic School. Our graduates leave with great memories and a top-notch educational experience.

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? \$6671
(School budget divided by enrollment)

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

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